BOOK LOVERS VERSE

HOWARD S. RUDDY

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BOOKS ABOUT BOOKS

Book Lovers' Verse

BOOK LOVERS' VERSE

Being Songs of Books and Bookmen Compiled from English and American Authors

By HOWARD S. RUDDY

Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
With volumes that I prize above my Dukedom
The Tempest

INDIANAPOLIS

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TO

MR. SAMUEL D. LEE

Introduction

While the love of books has been expressed with some degree of generality by the bookmen of mediæval and of modern times, in learned treatise and in pleasing meter, when one undertakes an inquiry into the subject, the poverty of available material seems out of proportion to the inspiration which the subject might have been expected to possess. Perhaps it should not be assumed that the poets are not book-lovers themselves, or that, being book-lovers, they are unable to gratify a taste for the possession of books because they are poets; but rather that their muse the more readily responds to the seductions of a pair of blue eyes, or a tress of golden hair, or even the fleeting glimpse of an arched instep, inspirations that are illusive and transitory when measured against the steadfastness of good books,

> " . . . the best of friends,
> That can not be estranged or take offense
> Howe'er neglected, but return at will
> With the old friendship."

Be that as it may, careful research discloses only the apparent indifference in

which some of the bards of first estate have held their libraries; for it is a safe conclusion that the true bibliophile would not withhold his meed of praise from these representatives of the great intellects of all ages.

It is not possible, perhaps, to ascertain just when the poets began to sing the praises of books, but the verses of Alcuin in the latter part of the eighth century are evidence of that blossoming of love for the wisdom of the sages, then so difficult of gratification; a love which grew upon what it fed, until in this day it finds expression in the yearnings, so plaintively expressed, of the lamented bibliomaniac of Buena Park—

"Oh for a booke and a shady nooke
Eyther in doore or out,
With the greene leaves whispering overhead,
Or the streete cryes all about;
Where I maie reade all at my ease
Both of the newe and old,
For a jollie goode booke whereon to looke
Is better to me than golde!"

The editor takes the sweet unction to his soul that his collection of the songs of bookland is more extensive than any that has yet been presented, but if it is in any way lacking it may not be laid to his indifference; but rather to that frugality which

sometimes seizes humanity for no apparent reason. Yet he has to acknowledge, and does so with a proper feeling of gratitude, the kindness of many publishers and authors who have so readily given permission for the use of their verses, and if by chance any have been overlooked it will not have been due to a disregard of the rights of property, but to the impossibility of identifying verses which have been caught in their rounds of the press. To these apologies are hereby tendered.

H. S. R.

Rochester, N. Y.

Publishers' Note

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THE SOLACE OF BOOKS

WHAT matter though my room be small,
Though this red lamplight looks
On nothing but a papered wall
And some few rows of books?

For in my hand I hold a key
That opens golden doors;
At whose resistless sesame
A tide of sunlight pours,

In from the basking lawns that lie
Beyond the bound'ry wall;
Where summer broods eternally,
Where the cicalas call.

There all the landscape softer is,
There greener tendrils twine,
The bowers are roofed with clematis,
With briony and vine.

There pears and golden apples hang,
There falls the honey-dew,
And there the birds that morning sang,
When all the world was new.

Beneath the oaks Menalcas woos
  Arachnia's nut-brown eyes;
And still the laughing Faun pursues,
  And still the wood-nymph flies.

And you may hear young Orpheus there
  Come singing through the wood,
Or catch the gleam of golden hair
  In Dian's solitude.

So when the world is all awry,
  When life is out of chime,
I take this key of gold and fly
  To that serener clime;

To those fair sunlit lawns that lie
  Beyond the bound'ry wall,
Where summer broods eternally
  And youth is over all.

THE SPECTATOR.

BURTON'S ANATOMY

A QUAINT old store of learning lies
  In Burton's pleasant pages,
With long quotations that comprise
  The wisdom of the ages.
'Tis strange to read him 'mid the crowd
  And modern hurly-burly;
The only author Johnson vowed
  Could make him get up early.

He lived a solitary life,
  He said "Mihi et musis,"
And put his rest from worldly strife
  To very pleasant uses.
He wrote the book wherein we find
  "All joys to this are folly,"
And naught to the reflective mind
  "So sweet as melancholy."

How strangely he dissects his theme
  In manner anatomic;
He's earnest at one time, you deem,
  Now decorously comic.
And most prodigiously he quotes,
  With learning quite gigantic,
Or telling classic anecdotes,
  Is pleasantly pedantic.

There's sterling sense in every page,
  And shrewdest cogitation;
Your keen attention he'll engage,
  And honest admiration.
If any man should vow to live
  With but one book, be certain
To him could friendly fortune give
  No better book than Burton.

He lies at rest in Christ's Church aisle,
  With all his erudition;
The hieroglyphics make one smile,
  That show his superstition.
His epitaph survives to-day,
  As one "Cui vitam dedit
Et mortem Melancholia,"
  So he himself has said it.

ANDREW LANG.

BALLADE OF POOR BOOK-WORMS

THE book-stall on the corner bleak,
Its grinning keeper knows us well;
As we pass by we never speak,
But often linger for a spell.
We ken the kernel by the shell,
And oft our slender purse is led
Its grudging silver down to tell:
Books we must have though we lack bread!

Great stores we pass with glance oblique—
Our coins their coffers seldom swell;
We wend to second-hand shop meek;
We heed not dust, nor dirt, nor smell,
The creaking door a cracked old bell
Sets jangling, and the hinge is red
With rust, but bargains here they sell:
Books we must have though we lack bread!

We haunt book auctions week by week;
Sweet music to our ears is yell
Of "Going, going," and the shriek
Of "Gone!"—since unto us it fell,
"Lot 3." One cast us down to hell
With Dante, one to heaven sped
Our souls—his namesake's Damozel:
Books we must have though we lack bread!

ENVOY

Love, when our plenishing we'd seek,
We bought the bookcase ere the bed;
And this is still the purse's leak:
Books we must have though we lack bread!

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

A GOOD BOOK

THAT book is good
Which puts me in a working mood.
Unless to Thought is added Will,
Apollo is an imbecile.
What parts, what gems, what colors shine,—
Ah, but I miss the grand design.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

My Books

MY BOOKS

SADLY as some old mediæval knight
Gazed at the arms he could no longer wield,
The sword two-handed and the shining shield
Suspended in the hall, and full in sight,
While secret longings for the lost delight
Of tourney or adventure in the field
Came over him, and tears but half concealed
Trembled and fell upon his beard of white,
So I behold these books upon their shelf,
My ornaments and arms of other days;
Not wholly useless, though no longer used,
For they remind me of my other self,
Younger and stronger, and the pleasant ways
In which I walked, now clouded and confused.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE OLD BOOKS

THE old books, the old books, the books
of long ago!
Who ever felt Miss Austen tame, or called
Sir Walter slow?
We did not care the worst to bare of human
sty or den;
We liked to love a little bit and trust our
fellow-men.
The old books, the old books, as pure as
summer breeze!
We read them under garden boughs, by fire-
light on our knees,
They did not teach, they did not preach, or
scold us into good;
A noble spirit from them breathed, the rest
was understood.
O happy dusk, when lamps were lit, around
a mother's chair,
To listen as she read, and breathe the rich,
enchanted air;
Of banner bright and stainless knight, of
eerie elfin page,
With all that glamour of delight, that won-
drous Middle Age.

The Old Books

Then was there no forbidden tree with longing vainly eyed;
No hiding books with lock and key to childish ears denied;
The library was open field where all might come and go;
The Serpent had not yet revealed his heritage of woe.

The new books, the new books, the great neurotic school!
That never let the Furies sleep, the fervid passions cool.
Be real! they cry, and lust and strife thick crowd the horrid stage;
And every loathsome ill of life is "copy" to their page.
The new books, the new books, the other nobler kind!
Straight from the heart they come and speak, and round the heart they wind.
Marcella in her lovelier mood, a Stevenson, a Thrums,
A Kipling great in camp and wood, a Besant in the slums!
Not theirs to hint that all is dark, the sun has fled the day,
Not theirs to stamp the autumn leaf more deeply in the clay!

In every life they find a strain of good as
yet untold;
In simple hearts a noble vein of unsuspected
gold;
They hold the mirror to our times, they
paint in motley dyes
The image of our wants and crimes; they
bid us sympathize.
And not in vain: so rich the art, so rare the
painter's skill,
They wake in every sleeping heart the old
knight-errant still.

But the old books, the old books, the mother
loves them best;
They leave no bitter taste behind to haunt
the youthful breast:
They bid us hope, they bid us fill our hearts
with visions fair;
They do not paralyze the will with problems
of despair.
And as they lift from sloth and sense to fol-
low loftier pains,
And stir the blood of indolence to bubble in
the veins:
Inheritors of mighty things, who own a lin-
eage high,
We feel within us budding wings that long
to reach the sky:

The Old Books

To rise above the commonplace, and through
the cloud to soar,
And join the loftier company of grander
souls of yore.
Then as she reads each magic scene, the
firelight burning low,
How flush the cheeks! how quick, how
keen, the heart-beats come and go!
The mother's voice is soft and sweet, the
mother's look is kind,
But she has tones that cause to beat all pas-
sions of the mind;
And Alice weeps, and Jack inspired rides
forth a hero bold;
So master passions, early fired, burn on
when life is cold.

THE SPECTATOR.

FELLOW-FEELING

NOT a man of world-wide haunts;
I've never seen a foreign land;
The wondrous things the guidebook flaunts
I only know at second hand.
And yet I swear, from east to west,
The points where all directions meet,
The thoroughfare I love the best,
Is Tom De Quincey's Oxford Street.

Request me not to name its trend;
Invite me not, I pray, to name
Its place of starting or its end—
On this my information's lame.
No friend of mine has ever dwelt
Beside its lines; yet I repeat
For years and years and years I've felt
An ardent love for Oxford Street.

A warmth of love from pity born,
Begotten of the book which told
How, heartsick, famishing and worn,
De Quincey in the days of old
Staggered along in grim despair
And battled bravely with defeat
Beneath the ruddy, cheery glare
Of lamps that burned in Oxford Street.

Fellow-Feeling

Not for the dreams the poppy gave,
  Not for the story of the price
The truth-recording brilliant slave
  Paid for the pleasures of his vice—
Not for the magic of his lines,
  With wit and charm and grace replete,
Is it that my esteem inclines
  To Tom De Quincey's Oxford Street.

Ah, no. My warmest feelings woke
  Upon that day when first I read
Of how, superlatively broke,
  Drum-empty and without a red,
A stranger in a stranger town,
  Having forgotten how to eat,
The scholar wandered up and down
  Unsympathetic Oxford Street.

It roused my sympathy, I say,
  Because, it chanced, one time I struck,
Within a town not far away,
  Just such a wretched run of luck,
When, friendless in the passing throng,
  Without a kindly word to greet
My misery, I drilled along—
  Well, let us call it Oxford Street.

I know, I had that in my heart
  That marked the scholar's deep distress.
I know his woe—it's every part
  I know, I do not have to guess.

The words he wrote bind him to me
  In brotherhood firm and complete,
And in my mind together we
  Have often walked down Oxford Street.

And so I let the others laud
  The "Eater's" witchery and art;
I only give a silent nod,
  But deep, deep down within my heart,
Unceasing blessings I invoke
  And peaceful rest, profound, complete,
To him who walked when he was broke
  Beneath the lamps of Oxford Street.

THE CHICAGO RECORD.

My Books

MY BOOKS

THEY dwell in the odor of camphor,
They stand in a Sheraton shrine,
They are "warranted early editions,"
These worshipful tomes of mine;—

In their creamiest "Oxford vellum,"
In their redolent "crushed Levant,"
With their delicate watered linings,
They are jewels of price, I grant;—

Blind-tooled and morocco-jointed,
They have Bedford's daintiest dress,
They are graceful, attenuate, polished,
But they gather the dust, no less;—

For the row that I prize is yonder,
Away on the unglazed shelves,
The bulged and the bruised *octavos*,
The dear and the dumpy twelves,—

Montaigne with his sheep-skin blistered,
And Howell the worse for wear,
And the worm-drilled Jesuits' Horace,
And the little old cropped Molière,—

And the Burton I bought for a florin,
And the Rabelais foxed and flea'd—
For the others I never have opened,
But those are the books I read.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

THE CHRYSALIS OF A BOOK-WORM

I READ, O friend, no pages of old lore,
Which I loved well, and yet the flying days,
That softly passed as wind through green spring ways
And left a perfume, swift fly as of yore,
Though in clear Plato's stream I look no more,
Neither with Moschus sing Sicilian lays,
Nor with bold Dante wander in amaze,
Nor see our Will the Golden Age restore.
I read a book to which old books are new,
And new books old. A living book is mine—
In age, three years: in it I read no lies—
In it to myriad truths I find the clew—
A tender, little child: but I divine
Thoughts high as Dante's in its clear blue eyes.

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

A BALLADE OF MONTAIGNE

I SIT before the firelight's glow,
With peace between the world and me,
And con good Master Florio
With pipe a-light; and as I see
Queen Bess herself with book a-knee
Reading it o'er and o'er again,
Here, 'neath my cozy mantel-tree,
I smoke my pipe and read Montaigne.

Now howls the wind and drives the snow;
The traveler shivers on the lea;
While, with my precious folio,
Behold a happy devotee
To book and warmth and reverie!
The blast upon the window-pane
Disturbs me not, as, trouble-free,
I smoke my pipe and read Montaigne.

I am content, and thus I know
A mind as calm as summer sea,—
A heart that stranger is to woe.
To happiness I hold the key
In this rare, sweet philosophy;
And while the Fates so fair, ordain,
Well pleased with Destiny's decree,
I smoke my pipe and read Montaigne.

ENVOY

Prince! aye, King be your degree,
Thou monarch of immortal reign!
Always thy subject I would be,
And smoke my pipe and read Montaigne!

ARTHUR MACY.

THE BOOK

THERE is no frigate like a book
To take us leagues away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

EMILY DICKINSON.

COMPANIONS

"A French writer (whom I love well) speaks of three kinds of companions, men, women and books."
—Sir John Davys.

WE have companions, comrade mine;
Jolly good fellows, tried and true,
Are filling their cups with the Rhenish wine,
And pledging each other, as I do you.
Never a man in all the land
But has, in his hour of need, a friend,
Who stretches to him a helping hand,
And stands by him to the bitter end.
If not before, there is comfort then,
In the strong companionship of men.

But better than that, old friend of mine,
Is the love of woman, the life of life,
Whether in maiden's eyes it shine,
Or melts in the tender kiss of wife;
A heart contented to feel, not know,
That finds in the other its sole delight;
White hands that are loth to let us go,
The tenderness that is more than might!
On earth below, in heaven above,
Is there anything better than woman's love?

I do not say so, companion mine,
For what, without it, would I be here?
It lightens my troubles, like this good wine,
And, if I must weep, sheds tear for tear!
But books, old friends that are always new,
Of all good things that we know are best;
They never forsake us, as others do,
And never disturb our inward rest.
Here is truth in a world of lies,
And all that in man is great and wise!

Better than men and women, friend,
That are dust, though dear in our joy and pain,
Are the books their cunning hands have penned,
For they depart, but the books remain;
Through these they speak to us what was best
In the loving heart and the noble mind;
All their royal souls possessed
Belongs for ever to all mankind!
When others fail him, the wise man looks
To the sure companionship of books.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

THE BIBLIOPHILE

THE lover may rave of his ruddy-cheeked lass,
The sailor may sing of the sea:
And topers may tell of the charms of the glass,
But books have more beauty for me.

A book is a treasure more precious than gold;
An heirloom bequeathed to mankind;
A casket of wisdom in which we behold
The kingliest gems of the mind.

Though humble my lot, yet dull care I defy,
With books for my gentle allies;
And folly and vice from my presence will fly
When I think of the good and the wise.

My books shall supply me with balm for each blow,
When fortune my best effort spurns;
With Swift I will laugh at the high and the low,
And mourn o'er a "mousie" with Burns.

Book Lovers' Verse

While sitting at ease by my own fireside,
A famous old book on my knee,
A lover alone with his beautiful bride
Would win little envy from me.

My heart feels at peace as through Book-world I roam,
The fair realms of fancy are mine,
And Love's holy spirit now rests on my home—
My Book is the Volume Divine.

ALFRED C. BRANT.

MY BOOKS

ON my study shelves they stand,
Well known all to eye and hand,
Bound in gorgeous cloth of gold,
In morocco rich and old.
Some in paper, plain and cheap,
Some in muslin, calf, and sheep;
Volumes great and volumes small,
Ranged along my study wall;
But their contents are past finding
By their size or by their binding.

There is one with gold agleam,
Like the Sangreal in a dream,
Back and boards in every part
Triumph of the binder's art;
Costing more, 'tis well believed,
Than the author e'er received.
But its contents? Idle tales,
Flappings of a shallop's sails!
In the treasury of learning
Scarcely worth a penny's turning.

Here's a tome in paper plain,
Soiled and torn and marred with stain,
Cowering from each statelier book
In the darkest, dustiest nook.

Take it down, and lo! each page
Breathes the wisdom of a sage:
Weighed a thousand times in gold,
Half its worth would not be told,
For all truth of ancient story
Crowns each line with deathless glory.

On my study shelves they stand;
But my study walls expand,
As thought's pinions are unfurled,
Till they compass all the world.
Endless files go marching by,
Men of lowly rank and high,
Some in broadcloth, gem-adorned,
Some in homespun, fortune-scorned;
But God's scales that all are weighed in
Heed not what each man's arrayed in!

WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON.

GIVE ME THE OLD

OLD books to read!—
Ay, bring those nodes of wit,
The brazen-clasped, the vellum writ,
Time-honored tomes!
The same my sire scanned before,
The same my grandsire thumbèd o'er,
The same his sire from college bore,
The well-earned meed
Of Oxford's domes;
Old Homer blind,
Old Horace, rake Anacreon, by
Old Tully, Plautus, Terence lie;
Mort Arthur's olden minstrelsie,
Quaint Burton, quainter Spenser, ay!
And Gervase Markham's venerie,—
Nor leave behind
The Holye Book by which we live and die.

ROBERT HINCHLEY MESSENGER.

A VOLUME OF DANTE

I LIE unread, alone. None heedeth me.
Day after day the cobwebs are unswept
From my dim covers. I have lain and slept
In dust and darkness for a century.
An old forgotten volume I. You see!
Such mighty words within my heart are kept
That, reading once, great Ariosto wept
In vain despair so impotent to be.

And once, with pensive eyes and drooping head,
Musing, Vittoria Colonna came,
And touched my leaves with dreamy finger-tips,
Lifted me up half absently, and read;
Then kissed the page with sudden, tender lips,
And sighed, and murmured one beloved name.

CAROLINE WILDER FELLOWS.

MARCUS VARRO

MARCUS VARRO went up and down
The places where old books were sold;
He ransacked all the shops in town
For pictures new and pictures old.
He gave the folk of earth no peace;
Snooping around by day and night,
He plied the trade in Rome and Greece
Of an insatiate Grangerite.

"Pictures!" was evermore his cry—
"Pictures of old or recent date,"
And pictures only would he buy
Wherewith to "extra-illustrate."
Full many a tome of ancient type
And many a manuscript he took
For nary purpose but to swipe
Their pictures for some other book.

While Marcus Varro plied his fad
There was not in the shops of Greece
A book or pamphlet to be had
That was not minus frontispiece.
Nor did he hesitate to ply
His baleful practices at home;
It was not possible to buy
A perfect book in all of Rome!

What must the other folk have done—
  Who, glancing o'er the books they bought,
Came soon and suddenly upon
  The vandalism Varro wrought!
How must their cheeks have flamed with red—
  How did their hearts with choler beat!
We can imagine what they said—
  We can imagine, not repeat!

Where are the books that Varro made—
  The pride of dilettante Rome—
With divers portraitures inlaid
  Swiped from so many another tome?
The worms devoured them long ago—
  O wretched worms! ye should have fed
Not on the books "extended" so
  But on old Varro's flesh, instead!

Alas, that Marcus Varro lives
  And is a potent factor yet!
Alas, that still his practice gives
  Good men occasion for regret!
To yonder bookstall, pri'thee, go,
  And by the "missing" prints and plates
And frontispieces you shall know
  He lives, and "extra-illustrates!"

EUGENE FIELD.

"The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

AT A BOOKSTORE

[Anno Domini, 1972.]

A CRAZY bookcase, placed before
A low-price dealer's open door;
Therein arrayed in broken rows
A ragged crew of rhyme and prose,
The homeless vagrants, waifs, and strays
Whose low estate this line betrays
(Set forth the lesser birds to lime)
YOUR CHOICE AMONG THESE BOOKS ONE DIME!

Ho! dealer; for its motto's sake
This scarecrow from the shelf I take;
Three starveling volumes bound in one,
Its covers warping in the sun.
Methinks it hath a musty smell,
I like its flavor none too well,
But Yorick's brain was far from dull,
Though Hamlet pah! 'd, and dropped his skull.

Why, here comes rain! The sky grows dark,—
Was that the roll of thunder? Hark!
The shop affords a safe retreat,
A chair extends its welcome seat,

The tradesman has a civil look
(I've paid, impromptu, for my book),
The clouds portend a sudden shower,—
I'll read my purchase for an hour.
. . . . . .
What have I rescued from the shelf?
A Boswell, writing out himself!
For though he changes dress and name,
The man beneath is still the same,
Laughing or sad, by fits and starts,
One actor in a dozen parts,
And whatsoe'er the mask may be,
The voice assures us, *This is he.*

I say not this to cry him down;
I find my Shakespeare in his clown,
His rogues the selfsame parent own;
Nay! Satan talks in Milton's tone!
Where'er the ocean inlet strays,
The salt sea wave its source betrays;
Where'er the queen of summer blows,
She tells the zephyr, "I'm the rose!"

And his is not the playwright's page;
His table does not ape the stage;
What matter if the figures seen
Are only shadows on a screen,
He finds in them his lurking thought,
And on their lips the words he sought,
Like one who sits before the keys
And plays a tune himself to please.

At a Bookstore

And was he noted in his day?
Read, flattered, honored? Who shall say?
Poor wreck of time the wave has cast
To find a peaceful shore at last,
Once glorying in thy gilded name
And freighted deep with hopes of fame,
Thy leaf is moistened with a tear,
The first for many a long, long year!

For be it more or less of art
That veils the lowliest human heart
Where passion throbs, where friendship
glows,
Where pity's tender tribute flows,
Where love has lit its fragrant fire,
And sorrow quenched its vain desire,
For me the altar is divine,
Its flame, its ashes,—all are mine!

And thou, my brother, as I look
And see thee pictured in thy book,
Thy years on every page confessed
In shadows lengthening from the west,
Thy glance that wanders, as it sought
Some freshly opening flower of thought,
Thy hopeful nature, light and free,
I start to find myself in thee!

. . . . . .

Come, vagrant, outcast, wretch forlorn
In leather jerkin stained and torn,

Whose talk has filled my idle hour
And made me half forget the shower,
I'll do at least as much for you,
Your coat I'll patch, your gilt renew,
Read you—perhaps—some other time.
Not bad, my bargain! Price one dime!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

A BOOK-LOVER'S APOLOGIA

TEMPTATION lurks in every leaf
Of printed page or cover,
Whene'er I haunt the bookshops old,
Their treasures rare discover;
Or when, in choicest catalogues,
Among which I'm a rover,
My heart leaps up their names to see—
For am I not their lover?

I linger o'er each dainty page,
With loving touch and tender,
But find their sweet, seductive charms
Soon call me to surrender.
Brave fight, 'twixt heart and my lean purse,
My loved books' strong defender!
More precious for the valiant strife
That love is called to render.

But when in Bibliopolis
Their dear forms 'round me cluster,
While rank on rank and file on file,
In gathering numbers muster,
Think you, I mind the sordid tongues
That soulless talk and bluster,
Or weigh, against their priceless worth,
The golden dollar's luster?

Ah, no! since there are drink and food
For which the soul has longings,
And in its daily, upward strife,
Finds both in such belongings;
Dear books! Loved friends, full meet ye are
To greet the earliest dawnings
Of all the happiest days in life,
Of all its brightest mornings!

HARRIETTE C. S. BUCKHAM.

THE LAND OF STORY BOOKS

AT evening, when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now with my little gun I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow 'round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are the starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in fire-lit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of story-books.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

"A Child's Garden of Verses."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Bookworm

THE BOOKWORM

WE flung the close-kept casement wide;
The myriad atom-play
Streamed, with the mid-day's glancing tide,
Across him as he lay;
Only the unused summer gust
Moved the thin hair of Dryasdust

The notes he writ were barely dry;
The entering breeze's breath
Fluttered the fruitless casuistry,
Checked at the leaf where Death—
The final commentator—thrust
His cold "Here endeth Dryasdust."

O fool and blind! The leaf that grew,
The opening bud, the trees,
The face of men, he nowise knew,
Or careless turned from these
To delve, in folios' rust and must,
The tomb he lived in, dry as dust.

He left, for mute Salmasius,
The lore a child may teach,—
For saws of dead Libanius,
The sound of uttered speech;
No voice had pierced the sheep-skin crust
That bound the heart of Dryasdust.

And so, with none to close his eyes,
  And none to mourn him dead,
He in his dumb book-Babel lies
  With gray dust garmented.
Let be: pass on. It is but just—
These were thy gods, O Dryasdust!

Dig we his grave where no birds greet,—
  He loved no song of birds;
Lay we his bones where no men meet,—
  He loved no spoken words;
He let his human-nature rust—
Write his *Hic Jacet* in the Dust.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

FROM "IDYLLS AND EPIGRAMS"

OUR master, Meleager, he who framed
The first Anthology and daintiest,
Mated each minstrel with a flower, and named
For each the blossom that beseemed him best.
'Twas then as now; garlands were somewhat rare,
Candidates many: one in a doleful strain
Lamented thus: "This is a sad affair;
How shall I face my publisher again?
Lacking some emblem suitable for me,
My book's undone; I shall not sell a copy."
"Take courage, son," quoth Phœbus, "there must be
Somewhere or other certainly a poppy."

RICHARD GARNETT.

BOCCACCIO

"ONE day upon a topmost shelf
I found a precious prize, indeed,
Which father used to read, himself,
But did not want us boys to read;
A brown old book of certain age
(As type and binding seemed to show),
While on the spotted title-page
Appeared the name 'Boccaccio.'

"I'd never heard that name before,
But in due season it became
To him who fondly brooded o'er
Those pages a belovèd name!
Adown the centuries I walked
Mid pastoral scenes and royal show;
With seigneurs and their dames I talked—
The crony of Boccaccio.

"Those courtly knights and sprightly maids,
Who really seemed disposed to shine
In gallantries and escapades,
Anon became great friends of mine.
Yet was there sentiment with fun,
And oftentimes my tears would flow
At some quaint tale of valor done,
As told by my Boccaccio.

Boccaccio

"In boyish dreams I saw again
  Bucolic belles and dames of court.
The princely youths and monkish men
  Arrayed for sacrifice or sport;
Again I heard the nightingale
  Sing as she sung those years ago
In his embowered Italian vale
  To my revered Boccaccio.

"And still I love that brown old book
  I found upon the topmost shelf—
I love it so I let none look
  Upon the treasure but myself!
And yet I have a strapping boy
  Who (I have every cause to know)
Would to its full extent enjoy
  The friendship of Boccaccio!

"But boys are, oh! so different now
  From what they were when I was one!
I fear my boy would not know how
  To take that old raconteur's fun!
In your companionship, O friend,
  I think it wise alone to go
Plucking the gracious fruits that bend
  Where e'er you lead, Boccaccio.

"So rest you there upon the shelf,
  Clad in your garb of faded brown;
Perhaps, some time, my boy himself
  Shall find you out and take you down.

Then may he feel the joy once more
That thrilled me, filled me years ago
When reverently I brooded o'er
The glories of Boccaccio!"

EUGENE FIELD.

"The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

A NEGLECTED POET IN A LIBRARY

I WANDER on, I hunt through every stall—
I find it not on low or high shelf,
The book I prize the most of all;
"Which one?" Why, the one I wrote myself.
"It may be out." Ah, happy thought!
There was a copy, I remind me,
Somehow missed—none was ever bought—
But one's enough for fame to find me.

ADAM QUINCE.

ANNETTA JONES—HER BOOK

A RARE old print of Shakespeare—his works, in boards of brown,
With quaint engravings; here and there the yellowed leaves turned down
Where sweet, love-breathing Juliet speaks, and as I lean and look,
Traced in pale, faded ink, these words: "Annetta Jones: Her Book."

Now, this old print of Shakespeare I prize, because 'tis rare—
The gem of all my library, in dust and glory there;
I marvel much at Hamlet's ghost, and Banquo's pictured bones,
But who—ye gods of ancient days, was this "Annetta Jones"?

I think I've heard that name before,—Jones?—Jones?—but that "Annetta,"
With odd embroidery around the first and final letter,
Is sweet and quaint . . . She was no saint, prim—grim! for I discover
By these sublime, marked sentences, Annetta had a lover!

And I believe her eyes were blue—her lips
as cherries red,
And many a shy, sweet kiss they knew, and
tender words they said;
And from her powdered brows gold hair
fell cloud-like—soft and sweet,
Down-streaming, gleaming, dreaming in her
silver-slippered feet!

She lived—she loved—was wedded; the ro-
mance of her life
Perchance was toned a trifle when her lover
called her "wife;"
But what a glorious fate is hers! for as I
lean and look
Her name still shines with Shakespeare's:
"Annetta Jones: Her Book."

FRANK L. STANTON.

A Legend of the Strand

A LEGEND OF THE STRAND

'TIS said an author who had starved to death
Went walking, some years after he had lost his breath,
In spirit up Fleet Street, then down the Strand,
And found himself before a bookman's stand.
"What's this?" he mused, as in his hand
A book
He took
"Dear me, my verse!" he cried, and kissed the tome.
"You killed me—cost me hearth and home
To publish you I spent
My every cent.
No man would buy,
And I
Was soon a shadow of my former self.
Whilst you lay snugly on my dusty shelf.
Heigho!" he sighed,
"Thou wert my pride,
And ruin." Quoth the book: "Not so!
You died too soon to really know.
I have become
A rarity, and worth a wondrous sum.

And through me now
You wear the laurel on your brow!"
E'en as the volume spake
A mortal came, the little book did take,
And as the spirit watched him from the
shade,
Some twenty pounds for it he paid.
"Egad!" the author cried, as back he sped
To Hades. "I have on my head
Enough of hay entwined to feed a horse!
I'm proud of it—oh yes, I am, of course—
But what a shame to decorate
An author's pate
And leave his stomach to disintegrate!"

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

IN THE LIBRARY

THE room was given to firegleams and to night,
And as I mused, lo! where the books had been
Were souls of books, alive, and on my sight
Dawned growing day, in midst whereof was seen,
With sad stern face, eyes pitying, vesture white,
The Lord of Souls, who, dying, won Life's fight.
Then all the book-souls bowed before the bright
Surrounding glory of the Lord of Light.

Then, one by one, He touched them on the side,
And some to scented ashes sank and died;
Some gave the semblance of a human heart,
Some like a working hand of help did show,
Some changed to lamps tipped with a steadfast glow,
One only of its Lord was counterpart.

H. V. S. HERBERT.

TO CALIPH OMAR

OMAR, who burned (if thou didst burn)
The Alexandrian tomes,
I would erect to thee an urn
Beneath Sophia's domes.

Would that thy exemplary torch
Might bravely blaze again,
And many manufactories scorch
Of book-inditing men!

Especially I'd have thee choke
Law libraries in sheep,
With fire derived from ancient Coke,
And sink in ashes deep.

Destroy the sheep—don't save my own—
I weary to the cram,
The misplaced diligence I've shown—
But kindly spare my Lamb.

And spare, oh, spare this suppliant book
Against a time of need;
Hide it away in humble nook
To serve for legal seed.

The man who writes but hundred pages
Where thousands went before,
Deserves the thanks of weary sages,
And Omar should adore.

IRVING BROWNE.

THESE BOOKS OF MINE

MY garden aboundeth in pleasant nooks
And fragrance is over it all;
For sweet is the smell of my old, old books
In their places against the wall.

Here is a folio that's grim with age
And yellow and green with mold;
There's the breath of the sea on every page
And the hint of a stanch ship's hold.

And here is a treasure from France la belle
Exhaleth a faint perfume
Of wedded lily and asphodel
In a garden of song abloom.

And this wee little book of Puritan mien
And rude, conspicuous print
Hath the Yankee flavor of wintergreen,
Or, may be, of peppermint.

In Walton the brooks a-babbling tell
Where the cheery daisy grows,
And where in meadow or woodland dwell
The buttercup and the rose.

But best beloved of books, I ween,
Are those which one perceives
Are hallowed by ashes dropped between
The yellow, well-thumbed leaves.

For it's here a laugh and it's there a tear,
Till the treasured book is read;
And the ashes betwixt the pages here
Tell us of one long dead.

But the gracious presence reappears
As we read the book again,
And the fragrance of precious, distant years
Filleth the hearts of men.

Come, pluck with me in my garden nooks
The posies that bloom for all;
Oh, sweet is the smell of my old, old books
In their places against the wall!

EUGENE FIELD.

"The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE TRUTH ABOUT HORACE

IT is very aggravating
To hear the solemn prating
Of the fossils who are stating
That old Horace was a prude;
When we know that with the ladies
He was always raising Hades,
And with many an escapade his
Best productions are imbued.

There's really not much harm in a
Large number of his carmina,
But these people find alarm in a
Few records of his acts;
So they'd squelch the muse caloric,
And to students sophomoric
They'd present as metaphoric
What old Horace meant for facts.

We have always thought 'em lazy;
Now we adjudge 'em crazy!
Why, Horace was a daisy
That was very much alive!
And the wisest of us know him
As his Lydia verses show him—
Go, read the virile poem—
It is No. 25.

He was a very owl, sir,
And starting out to prowl, sir,
You bet he made Rome howl, sir,
Until he filled his date;
With a massic-laden ditty
And a classic maiden pretty
He painted up the city,
And Mæcenas paid the freight.

EUGENE FIELD.

"A Little Book of Western Verse."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE BOOK-WORMS

THROUGH and through the inspired leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings;
But, oh, respect his lordship's taste,
And spare the golden bindings!

ROBERT BURNS.

THE STUDENT

A YOUTH was there, of quiet ways,
A student of old books and days,
To whom all tongues and lands were known
And yet a lover of his own;
With many a social virtue graced,
And yet a friend of solitude;
A man of such a genial mood
The heart of all things he embraced,
And yet of such fastidious taste,
He never found the best too good.
Books were his passion and delight,
And in his upper room at home
Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,
In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
Great volumes garmented in white,
Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.
He loved the twilight that surrounds
The border-land of old romance;
Where glitter hauberk, helm and lance,
And banner waves, and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist,
The dusk of centuries and of song.

The chronicles of Charlemagne,
Of Merlin and the Mort d' Arthure,
Mingled together in his brain
With tales of Flores and Blanchefleur,
Sir Ferumbras, Sir Eglamour,
Sir Launcelot, Sir Morgadour,
Sir Guy, Sir Bevis, Sir Gawain.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

LINES FER ISAAC BRADWELL, OF INDANOPLIS, IND., COUNTY-SEAT OF MARION

[Writ on the flyleaf of a volume of the author's poems that come in one of gittin' burnt up in the great Bowen-Merrill's fire of March 17, 1890.]

THROUGH fire and flood this book has passed.—
Fer what?—I hardly dare to ast—
Less'n it's still to pamper me
With extry food fer vanity;—
Fer, sence it 's fell in hands as true
As *yourn* is—and a *Hoosier* too,—
I'm prouder of the book, I jing!
Than 'fore they tried to burn the thing!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

IN A LIBRARY

THE fading firelight glimmers on the
shelves,
The gilded titles dance like tricksy elves,
I gaze on quartos dull, and "dumpy
twelves."—
I am alone.
The silence holds a faint and grewsome
dread,
A sense of spirits hovering o'er my head.
I really think it's time to go to bed!
Was that a moan?

Speaks Shakespeare's bust: "And dost thou
read my book?"
He gazes on me with a fearful look.
My face grows pale; both patent-leathers
shook
As I reply:
"Immortal Bard, I've done my level best.
Your plays are fine. But it must be con-
fessed,
That for the Sonnets I have found no zest,
And moments fly."

Then sad-mouthed Milton must thrust in an
oar:
"List, pallid creature, I've a question more.
Art thou of those dull clods who find a bore
'Our Mother Eve?'"

I tried to smile. What could a fellow do?
(Suppose the question had been put to you?)
I gently said: "I've read a Book or two,
I do believe."

But Homer spoke (I wished that he would nod),
And like some teacher grim with upraised rod,
Who o'er a shrinking urchin rides rough-shod,
Asked, "What of me?"
"To tell the truth," my trembling lips exclaim,
"I yield to none in reverence to thy name,
But as for Greek, I am not in the game,
And so you see—"

As thus I stammered, lo, another voice broke in,
And eke Dan Chaucer did at me begin:
"The Canterbury Tales?" Said I, with grin,
"Whanne that Aprille—"
"Alas!" quoth Chaucer, "that I wrote that line,
Naught else remains of all those poems of mine.
What dost thou read," he asked, "what authors shine,
What scribblers silly?"

In a Library

"I read—the papers," spoke I, soft and low,
"The magazines; a modern tale or so,
For really you old chaps are—dull, you know.
There, now I've said it!
I take for granted you great bards are such:
You sell well—gad! you never brought so much!
But as for wading through all your high Dutch
To say I've read it,

That's different, quite. And I would rather be
A man who reads the papers. Now, that's me—
A regular Philistine, as you see.
I hate all culture!"
At once those busts came tumbling from on high,
With him of Avon aiming at my eye—
So ends my nightmare, and I wake in cry
Like—say, a vulture.

TUDOR JENKS.

TWO GREEKS

[Written in Miss Thomas' "A Winter Swallow."]

HERE is the shelf I oftenest seek,
And here the book beloved of old,—
The songs of him whose soul was Greek,
Whose speech was English of pure gold.

No other book, it seemed to me,
Could share the little shelf with Keats;
For who, save him, had crossed the sea
To steal from Attic bees their sweets?

But now another English tongue
Has caught the trick of Grecian speech;
Another hand has plucked and flung
The golden apples within reach!

To-night the alcove's light burns low;
Pan's piping notes ring blithe and clear,
While, with Ægean's ebb and flow,
Antigone's brave voice I hear.

MEREDITH NICHOLSON.

A BOOK-LOVER'S PANEGYRIC

I

LET old Petrarca sing of love,
Its passion and its bliss,
And in his sugared sonnets tell
The rapture of a kiss!
Let Bacchanalian votaries
Exulting praise their wine—
But in the midst of all this praise
The praise of books be mine!

II

A health to books! come, Comrades all,
And pledge me this full cup;
Raise high the foaming goblets' brim
And drain the liquor up!
Come, quaff this nectarean bowl,
The brim raised to your lips,
So this enthusiastic health
All others shall eclipse!

III

A health to books! a royal toast,
And honored by a few,
But as the march of time goes on
The world shall drink it too!

Its men and women shall arise,
And sing in zealous strain
Their song of praise, and goblets raise
To drink it o'er again!

IV

So here's to books, to noble books,
Our pleasure and our boast;
Arise, ye denizens of earth,
To honor this fair toast!
Then here's to books, immortal books
Light of our nights and days,—
Stand up, O Universe, and chant
A pæan in their praise!

V

And, once again, a health to books,
Your goblets all refill;
When all things mortal are decayed
May books be with us still!
Then quaff a toast to glorious books
In cups of ruby wine,
And while the world extols things base
The praise of books be mine!

CYRIL M. DREW.

BOOKMAN'S CATCH

THE Bookman he's a humming-bird—
His feasts are honey-fine,—
(With hi! hilloo!
And clover-dew
And roses lush and rare!)
His roses are the phrase and word
Of olden tomes divine;
(With hi! and ho!
And pinks ablow
And posies everywhere!)
The Bookman he's a humming-bird,—
He steals from song to song—
He scents the ripest-blooming rhyme,
And takes his heart along
And sacks all sweets of bursting verse
And ballads, throng on throng.
(With ho! and hey!
And brook and brae,
And brinks of shade and shine!)

A humming-bird the Bookman is—
Though cumbrous, gray and grim,—
(With hi! hilloo!
And honey-dew
And odors musty-rare!)
He bends him o'er that page of his
As o'er the rose's rim.

(With hi! and ho!
And pinks aglow
And roses everywhere!)
Ay, he's the featest humming-bird,—
On airiest of wings
He poises pendent o'er the poem
That blossoms as it sings—
God friend him as he dips his beak
In such delicious things!
(With ho! and hey!
And world away
And only dreams for him!)

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

TRIOLET TO HER HUSBAND

[Rendered into English by Andrew Lang.]

BOOKS rule thy mind, so let it be!
Thy heart is mine, and mine alone.
What more can I require of thee?
Books rule thy mind, so let it be!
Contented when thy bliss I see,
I wish a world of books thine own.
Books rule thy mind, so let it be!
Thy heart is mine, and mine alone.

F. FERTIAULT.

OLD BOOKS ARE BEST

To J. H. P.

OLD books are best! With what delight
Does "Faithorne fecit" greet our sight
On frontispiece or title-page
Of that old time, when on the stage
"Sweet Nell" set "Rowley's" heart alight!

And you, O Friend, to whom I write,
Must not deny, e'en though you might,
Through fear of modern pirate's rage,
Old books are best.

What though the prints be not so bright,
The paper dark, the binding slight?
Our author, be he dull or sage,
Returning from that distant age
So lives again, we say of right:
Old books are best.

BEVERLY CHEW.

SONNET 77

THY glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste;
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning mayst thou taste.
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look, what thy memory can not contain
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee and much enrich thy book.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE SCHOLAR AND HIS BOOKS

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logik hadde longe i-go.
Al so lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake;
But Lokede holwe, and therto soburly.
Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy,
For he hadde nought geten him yit a benefice,
Ne was not worthy to haven an office.
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, cloth'd in bleak and reed,
Of Aristotil, and of his philosophie,
Then robus riche, or fithul, or sawtrie.
But al though he were a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litul gold in cofre;
But al that he might of his frendes hente,
On bookes and his lernyng he it spente,
And busily gan for the soules pray
Of hem that gaf him wherwith to scolay.
And studie took he most cure and heede.
Not oo word spak he more than was neede;
Al that he spak it was of heye prudence,
And schort and quyk, & ful of gret sentence.

Sownynge in moral manere was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

CHAUCER: "THE PROLOGUE."

HOW TO READ ME.

TO turn my volumes o'er nor find
(Sweet unsuspicious friend!)
Some vestige of an erring mind
To chide or discommend,
Believe that all were lov'd like you
With love from blame exempt,
Believe that all my griefs were true
And all my joys but dreamt.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

BOOK BROTHERHOOD

HERE are my companions sleeping
Tranquilly in each closed book,
Till a spirit in me leaping
From its bondage dares to look.

Here are those who felt deep heart-throes
In the morning of the earth,
All untutored, as the wind blows,
Giving human song its birth;
Diverse men in diverse races
Hearing, answering some faint call,
Finding links and losing traces
Where Oblivion drops its pall;
From chaotic dreams evolving
Thought once breathed on speaking stone,
Whose far-echoes now are solving
Problems in Thought's later zone;
Disputants of soul and matter—
God the Force, or Force the God—
As the autumn winds that scatter
Dry leaves on a dewy sod;
So departing, coming ever
With a new-inspired endeavor,
Here as brothers rest together.

Book Lovers' Verse

Books that keep alive the ages
  On my shelves abide in peace,
Truth enshrined within their pages
  Waiting for a full release;
Not alone in one tome dwelling,
  But in all, perchance, a gleam
In the dark, some dark dispelling
  Of humanity's strange dream.
Old true friends in welcome places
  Greet me in each varying mood,
And new friends with fresh young faces
  Woo with keen solicitude;
Ancient discords merging slowly
  Into one harmonious whole,
Time absorbing high or lowly
  In the majesty of soul.

Mighty dead, but mightier living
  Spirit of the brain and pen,
Founts of Thought for ever giving
  Impetus to yearning men,
So departing, coming ever
With a new-inspired endeavor,
Here as brothers rest together.

EDWARD FOSKETT.

IN A LIBRARY

A PRECIOUS moldering pleasure 'tis
To meet an antique book,
In just the dress his century wore;
A privilege, I think,

His venerable hand to take,
And warming in our own,
A passage back, or two, to make
To times when he was young.

His quaint opinions to inspect,
His knowledge to unfold
On what concerns our mutual mind,
The literature of old:

What interested scholars most,
What competitions ran
When Plato was a certainty
And Sophocles a man,

When Sappho was a living girl,
And Beatrice wore
The gown that Dante deified.
Facts, centuries before,

Book Lovers' Verse

He traverses familiar,
As one should come to town
And tell you all your dreams were true:
He lived where dreams were sown.

His presence is enchantment,
You beg him not to go;
His volumes shake their vellum heads
And tantalize, just so.

EMILY DICKINSON.

MY BOOKS

THESE are my books—a Burton old,
A Lamb, arrayed against the cold;
In polished dress of red and blue,
A rare old Elzevir or two,
And Johnson, clothed in green and gold.

A Pope, in gilded calf, I sold
To buy a Sterne, of worth untold,
To cry, as bibliomaniacs do,
"These are my books!"

What though a Fate unkind hath doled
But favors few to me, yet bold
My little wealth abroad I strew
To purchase acquisitions new,
And say, by love of them controlled,
"These are my books!"

NATHAN M. LEVY.

MY BOOKS

MY books, my books, my kingdom mine!
I have no need for love to pine;
I have no mistress but my books,
They never give me frowning looks,
Nor mock my heart when hopes decline.
But women change sans cause or sign,
And so I court the Muses Nine
In my poor den, or shady nooks,
My books, my books.

I love to see them line on line,
In shabby coat or superfine.
They are such friends—from bards to cooks,
And speak with joy of babbling brooks,
With peaceful woods that ever shine.
Fill me up with Lethean wine,
My books, my books!

S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald.

THE BOOKS I OUGHT TO READ

ON dusty shelves in serried rows they stand,
Reproachful thousands, quaint and grave and great;
My guilty conscience feels their mute command,
Yet day by day—they wait.

More formidable grow their ranks each year,
Their very names I can not call to mind;
A friend amid this chaos would, I fear,
Be very hard to find.

But to a corner shelf, by most forgot,
I steal, and give reproach no further heed
'Mid boon companions all—yet these are not
The books I ought to read.

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN.

OF MY BOOKS

AROUND the narrow circuit of the room
Breast-high the books I love range file on file;
And when, day-weary, I would rest awhile,
As once again slow falls the gathering gloom
Upon the world, I love to pass my hand
Along their serried ranks, and silent stand
In breathless heark'ning to their silent speech.
With rev'rent hand I touch the back of each
Of these my books. How much of their dear selves—
The hand that held the pen, the brain that wrought
The subtle fancies on these pages caught—
Have men immortal left upon my shelves!

And then sometimes a sudden chill doth strike
My heart with very horror, and I shrink
Away from their dull touch, shudd'ring to think
How much of human life that, vampire-like,

Of My Books

These books have sucked beneath their leathern wings,
How brains have broken and frail bodies bent
To feed with human blood these bloodless things.
In this thin book of poesy is pent
A beautiful young life;—imperial Rome
Holds what was mortal of it. Then I see,
All withered at the top, a noble tree
Here in the scathing scorn of this dark tome.
By this long line of books that mutely stands
A master-mind was wrecked, so that in years
He sat a poor old man in doting tears,
Because his dogs in pity licked his hands.

But then again there comes a rushing thought,
And to my *living* books my arms I raise
In loving fellowship of life and breath,
And, like poor Southey when his brain was naught
Save a pale glimmering light of other days,
I touch them tenderly. My spirit saith:
"Who gave their lives for these can know no death.

For I have walked with them in mortal guise
Through woodland ways and swarming city streets;
Yea, have I met the gaze of Shelley's eyes,
And in 'Hyperion' kissed the lips of Keats."

CHARLES WASHINGTON COLEMAN.

PERSONAL TALK

WINGS have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
'Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

"IO GROLIERII ET AMI-CORUM"

IF borrowed books but home returned again!
Or did they from their wandering escape
In pristine grace, with no deflow'ring stain,
No dog's-eared leaf, no binding all agape!
Against my wish my action thus I shape:
Like all true hearts, to share my treasures fain,
I'd gladly lend—but parting's sad sweet pain.
Ah, Grolier! Would thy motto I might ape!

No faint half-heart, no grudging spirit thine:
No boastful vaunt, to further private ends,
The never-dying, gold-emblazoned line
That tells the world thy books were for thy friends.

But yet, methinks, to cynic eyes it looks
As though thy friends out-numberèd thy books.

HALKETT LORD.

THE POEMS HERE AT HOME

THE Poems here at Home!—Who'll write
them down,
Jes as they air—in country and in Town?—
Sowed thick as clods is 'crost the fields and
lanes
Er these-'ere little hop-toads when it rains!—
Who'll "voice" 'em? as I heerd a feller say
'At speechified on Freedom, t'other day,
And soared the Eagle tel, it 'peared to me,
She wasn't bigger'n a bumblebee!

Who'll sort 'em out and set 'em down, says I,
'At's got a stiddy hand enough to try
To do 'em jestice 'thout a-foolin' some,
And headin' facts off when they want to
come?—
Who's got the lovin' eye, and heart, and
brain
To recko'nize 'at nothin' 's made in vain—
'At the Good Bein' made the bees and birds
And brutes first choice, and us-folks after-
wards?

What *We* want, as I sense it, in the line
O' poetry is somepin' Yours and Mine—
Somepin' with live-stock in it, and outdoors,
And old creek-bottoms, snags, and syca-
mores:

Putt weeds in—pizen-vines, and underbresh,
As well as Johnny-jump-ups, all so fresh
And sassy-like!—and groun'-squir'ls,—yes,
and "We,"
As sayin' is,—"We, Us and Company!"

Putt in old Nature's sermonts,—them's the
best,—
And 'casionly hang up a hornets' nest
'At boys 'at's run away from school can git
At handy-like—and let 'em tackle it!
Let us be wrought on, of a truth to feel
Our proneness fer to hurt more than we heal,
In ministratin' to our vain delights—
Fergittin' even insec's has their rights!

No "Ladies' Amaranth," ner "Treasury"
book—
Ner "Night Thoughts," nuther—ner no
"Lally Rook'"!
We want some poetry 'at's to Our taste,
Made out 'o truck 'at's jes a-goin' to waste
'Cause smart folks thinks it's altogether too
Outrageous common—'cept for me and you!—
Which goes to argy, all sich poetry
Is 'bliged to rest its hopes on You and Me.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

IN A LIBRARY

TREAD softly here, as ye would tread
In presence of the honored dead,
With reverent step and low-bowed head.

Speak low—as low as ye would speak
Before some saint of grandeur meek,
Whose favor ye would humbly seek.

Within these walls the very air
Seems weighted with a fragrance rare,
Like incense burned at ev'ning prayer.

Here may we sit and converse hold
With those whose names in ages old
Were in the book of fame enrolled.

Here under poet's power intense
We leave this world of sordid sense,
Where mortals strive with problems dense,

And mount to realms where fancy, free,
Above our poor humanity,
Roams in a joyous ecstasy.

Of if through history's maze we tread,
The hero, patriot, long since dead,
Whose great heart for his country bled,

Seems once again to work and fight,
In superstition's darkest night,
For God, his fellows, and the right.

Enough! mere words can never tell
The influence of the grateful spell
Which seems among these books to dwell.

ALICE SAWTELLE RANDALL.

MY BOOKS

ON level lines of woodwork stand
My books obedient to my hand;
And Cæsar pale against the wall
Smiles sternly Roman over all.
Within the four walls of this room
Life finds its prison, youth its tomb:
For here the minds of other men
Prompt and deride the laboring pen;
And here the wisdom of the wise
Dances like motes before the eyes.
Outside, the great world spins its way,
Here studious night dogs studious day.
A mighty store of dusty books,
Little and great, fill all the nooks,
And line the walls from roof to floor;
And I who read them o'er and o'er,
Am I much wiser than of old,
When sunlight leaped like living gold
Into my boyhood's heart, on fire
With fervid hope and wild desire;
And when behind no window bars,
But free as air I served the stars?

JUSTIN HUNTLEY MCCARTHY.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE COMPLETE ANGLER"

WHILE flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton: Sage benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline—
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree;
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

A BALLADE OF BOOK-MAKING

WHEN wise Koheleth long ago –
Though when and how the pundits wrangle —
Complained of books, and how they grow
And twist poor mankind's brains a-tangle,
He did not dream the fatal fangle
To such a pitch would e'er extend,
And such a world of paper mangle—
Of making books there is no end.

The poets weep for last year's snow,
About the porch the schoolmen dangle,
The owl-like eyes of science glow
O'er arc, hypothenuse, and angle;
The playwrights mouth, the preachers jangle,
The critics challenge and defend,
And Fiction turns the Muses' mangle—
Of making books there is no end.

Where'er we turn, where'er we go,
The books increase, the bookmen brangle:
Our bookshelves groan with row on row
Of nonsense typed in neat quadrangle.
Better to burn the lot and twangle
An honest banjo; better tend
To ride and box and shoot and angle—
Of making books there is no end.

ENVOY

Few books are worth a copper spangle:
Come forth, and choose, my dusty friend,
The ranchman's rope, the nautch-girl's bangle—
Of making books there is no end.

JUSTIN HUNTLEY MCCARTHY.

TO MY GOOD MASTER

IN fancy, always, at thy desk, thrown wide,
Thy most betreasured books ranged neighborly—
The rarest rhymes of every land and sea
And curious tongue—thine old face glorified,—
Thou haltest thy glib quill, and, laughing-eyed,
Givest hale welcome even unto me,
Profaning thus thine attic's sanctity,
To briefly visit, yet to still abide
Enthralled there of thy sorcery of wit
And thy songs' most exceeding dear conceits.
O lips, cleft to the ripe core of all sweets,
With poems, like nectar, issuing therefrom,
Thy gentle utterances do overcome
My listening heart and all the love of it!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

IN THE LIBRARY

FROM the oriels one by one
Slowly fades the setting sun;
On the marge of afternoon
Stands the new-born crescent moon;
In the twilight's crimson glow
Dim the quiet alcoves grow.
Drowsy-lidded Silence smiles
On the long deserted aisles;
Out of every shadowy nook
Spirit faces seem to look,
Some with smiling eyes, and some
With a sad entreaty dumb;
He who shepherded his sheep
On the wild Sicilian steep,
He above whose grave are set
Sprays of Roman violet;
Poets, sages,—all who wrought
In the crucible of thought.
Day by day as seasons glide
On the great eternal tide,
Noiselessly they gather thus
In the twilight beauteous,
Hold communion each with each,
Closer than our earthly speech,
Till within the East are born
Premonitions of the morn!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

A Ballade of Confession

A BALLADE OF CONFESSION

THE dog-eared tomes of ancient sages
Frown at me from the shelves up there,
World famous, ay, for many ages,
Braving the buffets of time and care;
Yet though they breathe Parnassian air,
Go hand in hand with Muses nine,
I pass them all, here's one more rare,—
The little book that once was thine!

I know that Horace scowls and rages,
That Homer writhes in vain despair,
That I should seek those pasturages
Where mawkish sentiments rave and tear.
Methinks all Helicon doth stare,
Forgets its hyssop steeped in wine,
To think that I to read should dare
The little book that once was thine!

'Tis only one of all the pages,
The others, Horace, I will swear
Know nought of me, my pilgrimages;
Your ire, dear Homer, please forbear!
Yon frisky Cupid might declare
The reason for this choice of mine,
For, Betty dear, 'twas his affair,
The little book that once was thine!

L'ENVOY

You sent it with a lock of hair
Pinned to the page's sweetest line;
That makes it far beyond compare,
The little book that once was thine!

HAROLD MCGRATH.

WISER THAN BOOKS

MY Love than books is wiser far.
I scanned the countless pages
Where all the words of wisdom are—
The proverbs of the sages;
I fain had known what meant a kiss,
What were component parts of bliss.
But, though I conned them o'er and o'er,
It was no plainer than before.
At last I found my Love, and he
Explained it clearly, all, to me.

KATRINA TRASK.

TO THE BOOK OF FOLLIES

THIS tribute from a wretched elf,
Who hails thee emblem of himself!
The book of life, which I have traced,
Has been, like thee, a motley waste
Of follies scribbled o'er and o'er,
One folly bringing hundreds more.
Some have indeed been writ so neat,
In characters so fair, so sweet,
That those who judge not too severely
Have said they loved such follies dearly!
Yet still, O book! the allusion stands;
For these were penned by *female* hands;
The rest,—alas! I own the truth,—
Have all been scribbled so uncouth,
That prudence, with a withering look,
Disdainful flings away the book.
Like thine, its pages here and there
Have oft been stained with blots of care;
And sometimes hours of peace, I own,
Upon some fairer leaves have shown,
White as the snowings of that Heaven
By which those hours of peace were given.
But now no longer—such, oh! such
The blast of Disappointment's touch!
No longer now those hours appear;
Each leaf is sullied by a tear:

Blank, blank is every page with care,
Not e'en a folly brightens there.
Will they yet brighten?—Never, never!
Then *shut the book*, O God, forever!

THOMAS MOORE.

AN UNCUT COPY

WHEN I was young I sent my friend a
copy of "My Verses,"
And when he died he left his books to me,
dear to his heart.
To-day I looked them over all, and find—
ten thousand curses!—
My book is there, and no two leaves have
e'er been cut apart.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

THE BOOK-WORM'S PLEDGE

I PLEDGED my word this morning,
As I started down the street,
That not a single book I'd buy—
For me a wondrous feat.

As I wandered past the windows
Of the news-stands on the way,
With scarce a wish to purchase,
I my mandate could obey.

But temptation, ever ready
To hold her victims fast,
In the guise of an old book store,
Filled with relics of the past,

Dawned upon my willing vision,
And I thought she'll never mind
If I glance within a moment
And perhaps some treasure find.

Ah, behold how fortune teases,
What a glorious prize is here!
First edition, not a blemish,
Rare old volume of Shakespeare.

Ah, I pledged my word this morning,
And to keep it I will try,
But the gods will frown upon me
Should I let that chance pass by.

Book Lovers' Verse

There on yonder shelf inviting
Rests a missal old and quaint,
Relic of the Gothic ages
Scanned by some mediæval saint;

Missal with the blazoned pages,
Triumph of the ancient art,
With your worn old vellum covers,
How you tempt my sinful heart!

Close beside it, dim and dusty,
Bearing imprint of the years
They have whirled along life's current,
Stand two priceless Elzevirs.

I pledged my word this morning,
But the keeping is too dear;
I would be far more than mortal,
Could I leave those volumes here.

Shades of bookmen who behold me,
Oh, forgive my perjured self;
You would leave your seat in glory
For a peep at yonder shelf.

C. D. Raymer.

MY PRESENTATION BOOK-CASE

[With Apologies to Rossetti's Sonnet: "A Superscription."]

LOOK on my shelves—the realm of Might-have-been:
And yet right glad am I they hold no knell,
Are undusk'd o'er with shadows of farewell—
But one and every book's alive with the sheen
Of Life and Art and what of each is seen.
Look on my shelves: lo, an enduring spell
To lure collectors' hopes intolerable:
Of loveliest thoughts and dreams the bookish screen.

Mark me, what dust there is! But should there dart
Along these rows the Bookman's eager eyes
Lit with a first-edition-glow surmise—
Then shalt thou see me ope, and turn apart
These frail glazed doors, and rend thy inmost heart
With many a rare unpurchasable prize.

WILLIAM SHARP.

DREAMS

MY library's not lined with treasures rare,
With treasures rich, with treasures past compare.
No manuscripts it holds of Poe, or Scott,
And many are the autographs I've not.
In yonder alcove, over to the left,
You'll find a spot of rarest tomes bereft;
And there upon the walnut chiffonnier
There stands no folio of Will Shakespeare.
Now turn the key of that not-buhl-work chest,
And gaze into its depths; no rare prints rest
Therein—just try, I pray, to take one out:
The truth of what I say 'twill prove past doubt.
Those Stevensons you fail to find up there
Are, all of them, the rarest of the rare:
And those editions of the Poets past
Hold not a "first" among them—all are "last."
And that small color sketch upon the wall
Is not a fine Cruikshank original.
But, oh what joy is mine to dream of what
I haven't got!

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

THE LAY OF THE GROLIERITE

THE love of maids, the love of maids,
'Tis sunshine when they smile;
But if they frown, how black the shades
Which shroud my heart the while.

The maids I love, the maids I love,
How pride doth hedge them in!
They hold their favor far above
My humble wit to win.

The maids I love, the maids I love,
Whoe'er would win such prize
Had need be harmless as the dove,
And, as the serpent, wise.

So not for me is love of maids,
Be they or kind or cold;
The love of maids, 'tis not for me,
Though I be young or old.

The love of books, the love of books,
It passeth love of maids;
It doth not fade with fading looks
Like love of them,—the jades!

The books I love, the books I love,
A gracious proffer make;
They hold a hoard of joys, whereof
They bid me freely take.

The books I love, the books I love,
They spread their welcome wide;
Not I alone may take thereof,
But all the world beside.

W. D. Ellwanger.

BOOKS

OR else I sat on in my chamber green,
And liv'd my life, and thought my thoughts, and pray'd
My prayers without the vicar; read my books,
Without considering whether they were fit
To do me good. Mark, there. We get no good
By being ungenerous, even to a book,
And calculating profits . . . so much help
By so much reading. It is rather when
We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge
Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—
'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

MY LIBRARY

AS one who pauses on a rock,
The bastion of some sea nymph's home,
And feels the ripples round him flock,
Then cleaves the foam,

And glides through cool, pellucid ways
Where creepers kiss each thrilling limb
And hears, or thinks he hears, low lays
Of cherubim,

And marvels at the wondrous scene,
The ruins upon ruins hurled,
The moving hosts, the darkling sheen,
The awful world,

Then rises, snatching first some gem,
Some token of his sojourn there,
And flings a dewy diadem
From face and hair,

And in the sunlight, with the sigh
Of sea winds whistling in his ears,
Views his found treasure till his eye
Is dim with tears;

So, where in lordly sweeping bays,
In distant dark retiring nooks,
Stretches before my eager gaze
This sea of books.

I pause and draw one fervent breath,
  Then plunge and seem to pass away
Into deep waters as still as death,
  Yet clear as day.

To move by bowlders of the past,
  By caves where falter dimly pure
Gleams of the future, all the vast
  Of literature.

Then to return to life above,
  From regions where but few have trod,
Bearing a gem of larger love
  To man and God.

THE BOOK I'VE READ BEFORE

I HEAR of many a "latest book;"
I note what zealous readers say;
Through columns critical I look,
With their decisive "yea" and "nay!"
At times I own I'm half inclined
O'er some new masterpiece to pore;
Yet in the end I always find
I choose the book I've read before!

Its well-known contents suit my taste,
I know what it is all about;
And so I never am in haste
To find "how it is coming out."
But quietly I wend my way:
O'er each familiar scene I pore—
The bright, the dark, the grave, the gay—
Of that old book I've read before.

Then worry not, my puzzled friend:
I'm odd, I own; and so while you
Your way through countless volumes wend,
Entranced with each, so "late" and "new,"
Be not surprised that I, meanwhile,
Avoiding new ones by the score,
Full many a passing hour beguile
With some old books I've read before!

And if, perchance, the hint you take
To shun the new, and read the old;
And find, surprised, the change you make
Reveals new beauties, all untold:
'Twill surely duplicate my joy
While o'er the old I fondly pore,
When you with me find sweet employ
In some old book we've read before.

CHARLES R. BALLARD.

IN A LIBRARY

THIS place is wonderful; here old romance,
Delicate phantasy and high emprize
Quicken the pulses and make big the eyes
Of Youth; and here strong manhood has the chance
To parley with its peers; and maidenhood
Is sweetly ripened for love's crowning good.

This is Imagination's room; and here
Keen Science, with a crystal-piercing gaze,
Wipes from the brain the mystifying haze
That doth hold back a world; the atmosphere
Is luminous with truth to God most dear.

Yea, 'tis a chosen chamber of the Lord,
A place where mind and soul learn Freedom's way;
Hence, meet it is, upon this Freedom's day,
When all Americans in vast accord,
With thunder of guns and pæan of bells proclaim
Their country and her righteousness of fame,
To open this fair hall and consecrate her name.

RICHARD BURTON.

BOOKS

THOUGH ne'er so humble should our station be,
We still may mingle with the great and wise;
Roam, unmolested, the vast treasuries
Where wisdom's priceless gems are scattered free.
We may, at will, explore sky, earth and sea;
Man's heart and mind probe deep with Shakespeare's eyes;
With blind old Milton walk through paradise;
Of life and death possess the master-key.

With books as guides, with prophet, poet, sage,
In sweet companionship we daily dwell;
With kings sit nightly round the banquet board;
By learning's light knowledge's gracious page
Shall render unto us a precious hoard
In an abundance inexhaustible.

ALFRED LAVINGTON.

A Fable for Critics

A FABLE FOR CRITICS

"MEANWHILE I have brought you a book,
Into which if you'll just have the goodness to look,
You may feel so delighted (when once you are through it)
As to deem it not unworth your while to review it,
And I think I can promise your thoughts, if you do,
A place in the next Democratic Review."

The most thankless of gods you must surely have thought me,
For this is the forty-fourth copy you've brought me,
I have given them away, or at least I have tried,
But I've forty-two left, standing all side by side—
(The man who accepted that one copy died),—
From one end of a shelf to the other they reach,
'With the author's respects' neatly written in each,

The publisher, sure, will proclaim a Te Deum,
When he hears of that order the British Museum
Has sent for one set of what books were first printed
In America, little or big,—for 'tis hinted
That this is the first truly tangible hope he
Has ever had raised for the sale of a copy.
I've thought very often 'twould be a good thing
In all public collections of books, if a wing
Were set off by itself, like the seas from the dry lands,
Marked Literature suited to desolate islands.
And filled with such books as could never be read
Save by readers of proofs, forced to do it for bread,—
Such books as one's wrecked on in small country-taverns,
Such as hermits might mortify over in caverns,
Such as Satan, if printing had then been invented,
As the climax of woe, would to Job have presented.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

To an Old Book

TO AN OLD BOOK

OLD book forlorn, compiled of ancient thought,
Now bought and sold, and once more sold and bought,
At last left stranded, where in time I spied,
Borne thither by an impecunious tide;
Well thumbed, stain-marked, but new and dear to me,
My purse and thy condition well agree.
I saw thee, yearned, then took thee to my arms,
For fellowship in misery has charms.
How long, I know not, thou hadst lain unscanned,
Thy mellow leaves untouched by loving hand—
For there thou wast beneath a dusty heap,
Unknown. I raised thee, therefore let me reap
A harvest from thy treasures. Thee I found—
Yea, thee I'll cherish; though new friends abound,
I'll still preserve thee as the years go round.

EDGAR GREENLEAF BRADFORD.

WITH A COPY OF THE ILIAD

BAYARD, awaken not this music strong
While round thy home the indolent sweet breeze
Floats lightly as the summer breath of seas
O'er which Ulysses heard the Sirens' song!
Dreams of low-lying isles to June belong,
And Circe holds us in her haunts of ease;
But later, when these high ancestral trees
Are sere, and such Odyssean languors wrong
The reddening strength of the autumnal year,
Yield to heroic words thine ear and eye;
Intent on these broad pages thou shalt hear
The trumpet's blare, the Argive battle-cry,
And see Achilles hurl his hurtling spear,
And mark the Trojan arrows make reply.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

OF THE BOOK-HUNTER

IN torrid heats of late July,
In March, beneath the bitter *bise*,
He book-hunts while the loungers fly,
He book-hunts, though December freeze;
In breeches baggy at the knees,
And heedless of the public jeers,
For these, for these, he hoards his fees,—
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

No dismal stall escapes his eye,
He turns o'er tomes of low degrees,
There soiled romanticists may lie,
Or Restoration comedies;
Each tract that flutters in the breeze
For him is charged with hopes and fears,
In moldy novels, fancy sees
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

With restless eyes that peer and spy,
Sad eyes that heed not skies nor trees,
In dismal nooks he loves to pry,
Whose motto evermore is *Spes!*
But ah! the fabled treasure flees;
Grown rarer with the fleeting years,
In rich men's shelves they take their ease,—
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

Envoy

Prince, all the things that tease and please,—
Fame, hope, wealth, kisses, cheers, and tears,
What are they but such toys as these,—
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

Andrew Lang.

THE BOOK

EACH life of man is but a page
In God's great diary; each age
A separate volume and each race
A chapter. For a little space
We write, and, childlike, cry our powers,
Nor deem His hand is guiding ours.

Post Wheeler.

ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF DRAMATIC POETS

I

IF all the flowers of all the fields on earth
By wonder-working summer were made one,
Its fragrance were not sweeter in the sun,
Its treasure-house of leaves were not more worth
Than those wherefrom thy light of musing mirth
Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pens would run
Breathed life, and all its breath were benison.
Beloved beyond all names of English birth,
More dear than mightier memories; gentlest name
That ever clothed itself with flower-sweet fame,
Or linked itself with loftiest names of old,
By right and might of loving; I, that am
Less than the least of these among thy fold,
Give only thanks for them to thee, Charles Lamb.

II

So many a year had borne its own bright bees
And slain them since thy honey-bees were hived,
John Day, in cells of flower-sweet verse, contrived
So well with craft of moldering melodies,
Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields at ease
Thought not to hear the sound on earth revived
Of summer music from the spring derived
When thy song sucked the flower of flowering trees.
But thine was not the chance of every day:
Time, after many a darkling hour, grew sunny,
And light between the clouds ere sunset swam,
Laughing, and kissed their darkness all away,
When, touched and tasted and approved, thy honey
Took subtler sweetness from the lips of Lamb.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

EXTRA-ILLUSTRATING

AMONG the books I have is one
That teases, tantalizes, taunts me;
Yea, like a demon or a dun,
That solitary volume haunts me.

It glowers upon me from the shelf,
And on my leisure time encroaches;
Like some malignant little elf,
It fills my mind with its reproaches.

Wherever I may turn my eyes,
Upon that tome they seem to linger;
I fancy that it moans and sighs,
And points at me a scornful finger.

It seems to say:—"I spoke you fair;
Yet how, oh! how have you repaid me?
You once esteemed me passing rare:
And yet behold what you have made me!

"Despoiled, I can not hide my shame;
'Twill be proclaimed to future ages,
When some book-loving squire or dame
Turns angrily my ravaged pages.

Book Lovers' Verse

"That book of yours has vast increase
  Of plates and prints of your collating;
Yet you must steal my frontispiece
  Because you're 'extra-illustrating.'"

It haunts me like relentless fate;
  Its jeers and sneers I can not smother—
This book from which I tore a plate
  To "extra-illustrate" another.

HARRY B. SMITH.

THE YOUNG WIFE'S PLAINT

NAY, seems it not most wondrous queer
That he should love to tarry here;
Prefer this "den" to boudoir nest
Where downy pillows coax to rest,
Chaise-longue and Turkish cigarette?
A stranger compound ne'er was met
Than this same creature man, I ween.
What's this dull calf to velvet sheen?
Who dares assert that this pert minx
On yellow page in dingy inks
Is half so fair as I am, see!
What woman would not angry be
With man who turns from living charms
To worship some dead beauty's arms?
Why should he care of smiles to read
When mine so sweet are his indeed?
What's Maintenon or this L'Enclos
Or Gwynn to him, I'd like to know?
What stupid fad, what silly rage
To *love* such trash of bygone age!
Why, as I live, these letters mean
Just fifteen hundred seventeen.
Nay, 'tis a shame to buy such stuff
When nice new books are cheap enough!
Knew I how soon I'd be forgot
I ne'er had wedded him, God wot.

Vile, musty books, in dead skins bound—
Faugh, what an odor lingers round!
'Tis shameful taste, indeed it is;
But hear my vow, ye loves of his,
In spite of all your dingy looks—
Apologies for decent books—
I'll win him back, ye mildewed crew,
I'll make him think I love you too!

BETTY BARNES, THE BOOK-BURNER

WHERE is that baleful maid
Who Shakespeare's quartos shred?
Whose slow diurnal raid
The flames with *Stephen* fed?
Where is *Duke Humphry* sped?
Where is the *Henries'* book?
They are all vanishèd
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

And now her ghost, dismayed,
In woful ways doth tread—
(Though once the grieving shade
Sir Walter visited)—
Where culprits sore bestead,
In dank or fiery nook,
Repent there deeds of dread
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

There Bagford's evil trade
Is duly punishèd;
There fierce the flames have played
Round Caliph Omar's head;
The biblioclastic dead
Have diverse pains to brook,
'Mid rats and rainpools led
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

Caxton! be comforted,
For those who wronged thee—look;
They break affliction's bread
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT-WATSON.

MY LORD THE BOOK

A BOOK is an aristocrat;
'Tis pampered—lives in state;
Stands on a shelf, with naught whereat
To worry—lovely fate!

Enjoys the best of company;
And often—ay, 'tis so—
Like much in aristocracy,
Its title makes it go.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

OLD AND NEW

OLD friends are best, the poets sing.
No others are so staunch and true.
New friends in trouble will not cling
As closely as the old friends do.

Old books are best without a doubt.
Their charms can never fail to win.
New books, however bright without,
Have not their power to please within.

Old wines are best, as all aver,
And often are their praises sung.
They're rich and rare, have power to stir
The pulses of both old and young.

Friends, wine and books have charms to please
When age its ivy round them curls;
But we've no use for such as these:
Old jokes, old clothes, old ballet girls.

OF READING

ONE drachma for a good book, and a thousand talents for a true friend:—
So standeth the market where scarce is ever costly.
Yea, were the diamonds of Golconda common as shingles on the shore,
A ripe apple would ransom kings before a shining store:
And so, were a wholesome book as rare as an honest friend,
To choose the book be mine; the friend let another take.
For altered looks and jealousies and fears have none entrance there:
The silent volume listeneth well, and speaketh when thou listeth:
It praiseth the good without envy, it chideth thine evil, without malice,
It is to thee thy waiting slave, and thine unbending teacher.
Need to humor no caprice, need to bear with no infirmity;
Thy sin, thy slander, or neglect, chilleth not, quencheth not, its love;

Of Reading

Unalterably speaketh it the truth, warped
not by error nor interest;
For a good book is the best of friends, the
same to-day and forever.

To draw thee out of self, thy petty plans and
cautions,
To teach thee what thou lackest, to tell thee
how largely thou art blest,
To lure thy thought from sorrow, to feed thy
famished mind,
To graft another's wisdom on thee, pruning thine own folly;
Choose discreetly, and well digest the volume most suited to thy case,
Touching not religion with levity, nor deep
things when thou art wearied.
Thy mind is freshened by morning air, grapple with science and philosophy;
Noon hath unnerved thy thoughts, dream
for a while on fictions;
Gray evening sobereth thy spirit, walk thou
then with worshipers;
But reason shall dig deepest in the night,
and fancy fly most free.
O books, ye monuments of mind, concrete
wisdom of the wisest;
Sweet solaces of daily life; proofs and results of immortality;

Trees yielding all fruits, whose leaves are
for the healing of the nations.
Groves of knowledge where all may eat, nor
fear a flaming sword;
Gentle comrades, kind advisers; friends,
comforts, treasures;
Helps, governments, diversities of tongues;
who can weigh your worth?
To walk no longer with the just; to be
driven from the porch of science;
To bid long adieu to those intimate ones,
poets, philosophers, and teachers;
To see no record of the sympathies which
bind thee in communion with the good;
To be thrust from the feet of Him, who
spake as never man spake;
To have no avenue to heaven but the dim
aisle of superstition;
To live as an Esquimau, in lethargy; to die
as the Mohawk, in ignorance:
O what were life, but a blank? What were
death, but a terror?
What were man, but a burden to himself?
What were mind, but misery?
Yea, let another Omar burn the full library
of knowledge,
And the broad world may perish in the
flames, offered on the ashes of its wis-
dom!

MARTIN FARQUHAR TUPPER.

MY BOOKS

I

THE winter evening closes blank and stern,
The flickering fire illumes with dancing light
My narrow chamber walls, and as the night
Draws on to morn, my lamp half down I turn.
Amid the shadows dimly I discern
My books, dumb comrades, gay and erudite,
From folios brown to pamphlets thin and white,
Well-nigh the only friends from whom I learn.
Full half of them would be by busy men
Rejected with a smile, but I—I move
Too seldom down the volumes that improve.
Give me the work of a forgotten pen,
Wild tales of Prester John or of the Cham,
Or emblem quaintnesses from Amsterdam.

II

Oh, happy he who, weary of the sound
  Of throbbing life, can shut his study door,
  Like Heinsius, on it all, to find a store
Of peace that otherwhere is never found!
Such happiness is mine, when all around
  My dear dumb friends in groups of three
    or four
  Command my soul to linger on the shore
Of those fair realms where they reign monarchs crowned.
To-day the strivings of the world are nought,
  For I am in a land that glows with God,
  And I am in a path by angels trod.
Dost ask what book creates such heavenly
    thought?
  Then know that I with Dante soar afar,
  Till earth shrinks slowly to a tiny star.

J. Williams.

To Robert Herrick

TO ROBERT HERRICK

JOCUND Herrick, tho' this age
Leaves uncut thy merry page,
Leaves thy song, thy robust jest
For Quixotic modern quest;

Thinks that all poetic bliss
Is summed in soul-analysis;
Swinburne's strange, erratic flight,
Weird desire and wild delight;

Pleasures in the paltry host—
Starveling muse's eager ghost
Dribbling song in purblind flow—
Poesy has sunk so low.

I would see beside the rill
Decked with lawn and daffodil
Sweetly thro' the morning air—
Corinna going to the fair!

I would hear the birds and bees
Sung of in Hesperides;
Would that I were with you there,
Drunken with the dewy air.

And Julia, paragon of grace,
I would look upon her face;
Then might I inspiréd be,
Fit to join thy company.

Ah! Herrick, softly on thy mound
I would still bestrew the ground—
Daffodil and rosemary
Tokens for thy memory.

THE PHILISTINE.

ALTRUISM

WHEN a book is packed with truth,
Never leave it on the shelf;
Pass it onward to your friends,
Having mastered it yourself.

If you have a friend indeed,
And you love him as a brother,
Do not keep it to yourself,
Tell it. He may bless another.

If you've heard a wise word spoken,
To a friend that word impart;
'Tis a seed-thought full of blessing,
Plant it in another's heart.

The book you lend will quicken thought;
The friend you praise another bless;
The word you speak may save a soul;
And all promote God's righteousness.

REV. WILLIAM WOOD.

THE OTHER "SAINTS AND SINNERS' CORNER"

BEYOND the Dread River and hard by the Lake
That burneth with Brimstone and Fire,
There standeth an Edifice built for the sake
Of Mortals of bookish desire.

'Tis not in high Heaven, this Book-hunter's haunt,
Nor lies it in Satan's Domains,
But midway between them—a moderate jaunt
By slow Purgatorial Trains.

There "Sinners" and "Saints" too, are wont to repair,
When stints for the morning are o'er,
Their bibliognostical notes to compare
And over their Treasures to pore.

Queer Bibliomaniac spirits are some;
Some miserly Bibliotaphs;
Some Bibliopoles with a golden thumb;
Some near-sighted Bibliographs.

And here through the long Labyrinthian aisles,
That open on book-scented bowers,
There wander, abstracted, these Bibliophiles
As bees 'mid Hymettus's flowers.

. . . . . .

The "Saints" of these Bookmen one Sunday
in Lent
Their Souls to Church did betake
To get them forgiveness for hours they had
spent
With "Sinners"—down by the Lake.

The "Sinners," the meanwhile, with many
a sigh
Sad penance were practicing, too;—
Each telling, for beads, the Books he would
buy
Had he only shilling or sou.

When, suddenly, startling both "Sinner"
and "Saint,"
'Twixt Wail and Chant of the Choir,
There came a terrestrial cry far and faint
Of "Fire, Fire, McClurg's is on fire."

. . . . . .

Then straightway there entered, with flut-
tering leaves,
The Souls of incinerate Books,
That long had reposed 'neath McClurgian
eaves,
In sacred Millardian nooks.

As Birds of the Forest they found their way
Home,
(Where Book-worms destroy not, nor
Rust),
Each volume the Phœnix of some precious
Tome
Consumed into ashes and dust.

Among them were Elzevirs, queens of their
kind,
Of delicate beauty and grace,
And Aldines and Pick'rings, and, trailing
behind,
The Kelmscotts of fair Saxon face.

Rich Zehnsdorf apparel some Souls did en-
fold;
And some were in Sanderson dress,
Of th' Orient redolent, 'broidered in gold,
And fresh from the Binder's caress.

For none were admitted to lie on the
shelves,
O'erguarded by Gutenberg's care,
Except the Elect, the Immortals them-
selves,—
None save "First Editions" and "rare."

. . . . . .

The "Saints" quick forgot their confessions
in mirth;
The "Sinners" their Rosaries spurned:
Such joy was in Limbo as when upon
Earth
Millard from his journeys returned.

They feasted their eyes on their treasures
new-found,
Not knowing which ones they loved most;
They sang bookish songs of hilarious sound,
And Field danced with Dibdin's glad
ghost.

Then, tiring, they nestled themselves in the
Nooks,
As "Sinners" and "Saints" did of old,
And thumbed o'er again the delectable
Books
Which, haply, Millard had not sold.

. . . . . .

Mourn not o'er their Ashes in hopelessness,
then,
Oh sorrowful Bibliophile,
In yonder far Corner we'll fondle again
These Books which we've lost for the
while.

JOHANNES HUSTONIUS FINLEIUS.

A DISAPPOINTED FADDIST

ERSTWHILE it was worth while to seek
for books that others lack
And pay great sums for them, as should a
bibliomaniac,
But it has come to pass, alas! to my extreme
amaze,
That posters about books are now a more
expensive craze.

I am rejoiced I do not own that priceless
Tamerlane,
For I should feel obliged to go and sell the
thing again,
In order to raise funds to buy some posters
for my son,
Who's bit with liking for these daubs that
all who read must run!

He's brought some cheap ones home, and
they hang o'er my precious books,
While I pursue my saddened way with
anguish in my looks;
I hoped my boy would early learn my biblio-
philish knack;
But, worse luck! he turns out to be a poster-
maniac!

THE BOSTON TRANSCRIPT.

THE BOOK BATTALION

WHEREVER I go, there's a trusty battalion
That follows me faithfully, steady and true;
Their force, when I falter, I safely may rally on,
Knowing their stoutness will carry me through;
Some fifteen hundred in order impartial,
So ranged that they tell what they mean by their looks.
Of all the armies the world can marshal
There are no better soldiers than the well-tried books.
Dumb in their ranks on the shelves imprisoned,
They never retreat. Give the word, and they'll fire!
A few with scarlet and gold are bedizened,
But many muster in rough attire;
And some, with service and scars grown wizened,
Seem hardly the mates for their fellows in youth;
Yet they, and the troops armed only with quiz and
Light laughter, all battle alike for the truth.

The Book Battalion

Here are those who gave motive to sock and
to buskin;
With critics, historians, poets galore;
A cheaply uniformed set of Ruskin,
Which Ruskin would hate from his heart's
very core;
Molière ('99), an old calf-bound edition,
"*De Pierre Didot l'aîné! et de Firmin Didot,*"
Which, meek and demure, with a sort of
contrition,
Is masking its gun-lights, with fun all
aglow;
And Smollett and Fielding, as veterans bat-
tered—
Cloth stripped from their backs, and their
sides out of joint,
The pictures of life all naked and tattered
Being thus applied to themselves with a
point;
And six or eight books that I wrote myself,
To look at which, even, I'm half afraid;
They brought me more labor and pleasure
than pelf,
And are clamoring still because they're
not paid.
But these raw levies remain still faithful,
Because they know that volumes old
Stand by me, although their eyes, dim and
wraithful,
Remind me they seldom at profit were sold.

So I say, be they splendid or tatterdemalion,
If only you know what they mean by their looks,
You will never find a better battalion
Of soldiers to serve you than well-tried books.

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP.

OLD FRIENDS, OLD BOOKS

OLD friends, old books are surely best,
Already long they've stood each test,—
In times of stress or indolence
Have ministered to soul and sense,
With grace responsive to each quest.

Aye, every whim by us possest,
When winds blow east or winds blow west,
They kindly humor—not incense—
Old friends, old books!

The new may touch with keener zest
When we with ennui are opprest,
But only briefly; turning thence,
With reawakened confidence,
We seek—for peace, for joy, for rest—
Old friends, old books!

CHARLES R. WILLIAMS.

THREE GOOD THINGS

"Bona in terra tria inveni—
Libros, Venerem, Vinum."

THREE good things I've thanked the gods for—
Play, and love, and wine,
So by Tiber sang my poet;
Would the song were mine!

Yet methinks I would not turn it
Just the Roman way,
But for ludum say read libros,
Books are more than play!

Through the togaed Latin trembles
Laughter half divine:
Flash the dice beside the column;
Rosy flagons shine.

I, for gleams of yellow Tiber,
Down my garden way,
See a water blue and beaming
In the northern day;

Ovid, Meleager, Omar,
In the orchard shade,
With a joy that gurgles gently,
And a white-armed maid.

Three good things I thank the gods
for—
Books, and love, and wine!
So, my Poet, singing later,
Would have run your line!

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

AIMLESS READING

BOOKS are not seldom talismans and
spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment, hoodwinked. Some
the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore, without pause or
choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE BIBLIOMANIAC'S ASSIGNMENT OF BINDERS

IF I could bring the dead to-day,
I would your soul with wonder fill
By pointing out a novel way
For bibliopegistic skill.

My Walton, Trautz should take in hand,
Or else I'd give him o'er to Hering;
Matthews should make the Gospels stand
A dateless warning to the erring.

The history of the Inquisition,
With all its diabolic train
Of cruelty and superstition,
Should fitly be arrayed by Payne.

A book of dreams by Bedford clad,
A papal history by De Rome,
Should make the sense of fitness glad
In every bibliomaniac's home.

As our first mother's folly cost
Her sex so dear, and makes men grieve,
So Milton's plaint of Eden lost
Would be appropriate for Eve.

Hayday would make "One summer" be
Much more attractive to the view;
While General Wolfe's biography
Should be the work of Pasdeloup.

For lives of dwarfs like Thomas Thumb
Petit's the man by Nature made,
And when Munchausen strikes us dumb
It is by means of Gascon aid.

Thus would I the great binders blend
In harmony with work before 'em.
And so Rivière I would commend
To Turner's "Liber Fluviorum."

IRVING BROWNE.

From Phyllis

FROM PHYLLIS

DEAREST, I read the books you sent, because
You sent them—but they're far too grave for me.
I like not serious stories, nor wise saws,
Chilling my youth with fear of ills to be.
But be not angry, since at your request
I read them all, and found the love-tale best.

Yet that was sad, too, and one sentence there
Tried and tormented me—that's why I write.
You've read the book. Do you remember where
The hero was made prisoner in the fight?
The heroine, to save her lover's life,
Renounced him and became his rival's wife.

And he reproached her: "Were I in your place
My life without you had been little worth."
"I'd live," she said, "through pain and through disgrace
To know you lived, though dead to me on earth."
Dearest, this troubled me, because, you see,
I'd rather die than have you dead to me.

CAROLINE DUER.

BOOKS

A PRECIOUS treasure had I long possessed,
A little yellow, canvas-covered book,
A slender abstract of the Arabian tales;
And, from companions in a new abode,
When first I learnt that this dear prize of mine
Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry—
That there were four large volumes, laden all
With kindred matter, 'twas to me, in truth,
A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly,
With one not richer than myself, I made
A covenant that each should lay aside
The moneys he possessed, and hoard up more,
Till our joint savings had amassed enough
To make this book our own. Through several months,
In spite of all temptation, we preserved
Religiously that vow; but firmness failed,
Nor were we ever masters of our wish.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

HOW A BIBLIOMANIAC BINDS HIS BOOKS

I'D like my favorite books to bind
So that their outward dress
To every bibliomaniac's mind
Their contents should express.

Napoleon's life should glare in red,
John Calvin's life in blue;
Thus they would typify bloodshed
And sour religion's hue.

The prize-ring record of the past
Must be in blue and black;
While any color that is fast
Would do for Derby track.

The Popes in scarlet well may go;
In jealous green, Othello;
In grey, Old Age of Cicero,
And London Cries in yellow.

My Walton should his gentle art
In salmon best express,
And Penn and Fox the friendly heart
In quiet drab confess.

Book Lovers' Verse

Statistics of the lumber trade
  Should be embraced in boards,
While muslin for the inspired Maid
  A fitting garb affords.

Intestine wars I'd clothe in vellum,
  While pig-skin Bacon grasps,
And flat romances such as "Pelham"
  Should stand in calf with clasps.

Blind-tooled should be blank verse and
      rhyme
  And prose of epic Milton;
But Newgate Calendar of Crime
  I'd lavishly dab gilt on.

The edges of a sculptor's life
  May fitly marbled be,
But sprinkle not, for fear of strife,
  A Baptist history.

Crimea's war-like facts and dates
  Of fragrant Russia smell;
The subjugated Barbary States
  In crushed Morocco dwell.

But oh! that one I hold so dear
  Should be arrayed so cheap
Gives me a qualm; I sadly fear
  My Lamb must be half-sheep!

IRVING BROWNE.

THE BOOKWORM DOES NOT CARE FOR NATURE

I FEEL no need of nature's flowers—
  Of flowers of rhetoric I have store;
I do not miss the balmy showers—
  When books are dry I o'er them pore.

Why should I sit upon a stile
  And cause my aged bones to ache,
When I can all the hours beguile
  With any style that I would take?

Why should I haunt a purling stream,
  Or fish in miasmatic brook?
O'er Euclid's angles I can dream,
  And recreation find in Hook.

Why should I jolt upon a horse
  And after wretched vermin roam,
When I can choose an easier course
  With Fox and Hare and Hunt at home?

What if some vicious bull were loose,
  Or fractious cow pursue my path?
A tamer Bulwer I would choose,
  A Cowper destitute of wrath.

Book Lovers' Verse

Why should I watch the swallows flit,
  And run the risk of butting ram?
A Swift upon my shelves Hazlitt,
  I need not run from waggish Lamb.

Why should I scratch my precious skin
  By crawling through a hawthorn hedge,
When Hawthorne, raking up my sin,
  Stands tempting on the nearest ledge?

No need that I should take the trouble
  To go abroad to walk or ride,
For I can sit at home and double
  Quite up with pain from Akenside.

IRVING BROWNE.

MY BOOKS

YOU ask me who my best friends are—
The ones whose love I value most.
I pause to make a wise reply,
For friends are mine from low and high,
Whose characters shine like a star.
(You will forgive the boast.)

This one for intellect I prize:
No depth for that too deep to sound;
No height for that to scale too steep;
No field so broad it can not sweep,
As swift as wingéd arrow flies,
Its area at a round.

This other to my heart appeals
By her deep fund of common-sense,
Life through her eyes is solid fact.
Avoid it? No! by shift nor tact.
Before no idol vague she kneels;
Dreams' veil is full of rents.

And this? Her life is radiance soft;
Her heav'n-born, earth-imprisoned soul
Is turned to music of the spheres,
No discords mingle—cares nor fears—
Her spirit soars and soars aloft,
Revolves 'round heaven's pole.

And yet, when earth-dust clings and clods,
And blinding grows the storm of life,
What friends my drooping spirits raise
As these—my books? To them the praise
For constancy like to a god's,
With deepest comfort rife!

ALICE SAWTELLE RANDALL.

WITH PIPE AND BOOK

WITH Pipe and Book at close of day,
O! what is sweeter, mortal, say!
It matters not what book on knee,
Old Izaak or the Odyssey,
It matters not meerschaum or clay.

And though one's eyes will dream astray,
And lips forget to sue or sway,
It is "enough to merely Be,"
With Pipe and Book.

What though our modern skies be grey,
As bards aver, I will not pray
For "soothing Death" to succor me,
But ask thus much, O Fate, of thee,—
A little longer here to stay
With Pipe and Book.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

A Collector's Catalogue

A COLLECTOR'S CATALOGUE

MY catalogue, my catalogue,
It is my heart's delight!
Of all my "prints" it is the best,
The only one just right.
But it's a list of noble names
A-standing side by side.
I've had it printed by De Vinne
With bibliographic pride.

To think my Marc Antonio,
The gem of my collection,
—Or rather it would be the gem
But for this low connection—
Should have the hated name Ant. Sal.
Engraved right down below!
Which will disfigure any print,
As print collectors know.

Then, too, my master of the Die
Looks like the last one printed,
While my most wondrous Wohlgemuth
Is spoiled by being tinted.
My Sadlers all have margins clipped,
My Visschers are laid down,
My Hollar has had such abuse,
Makes a collector frown.

Perhaps my Martin Schingauer,
My Rembrandts rare and grand,
Are like my Albrecht Dûrers—
Done by a modern hand!
My Vand den Veldes are precious,
But only so to me,
For they are not by Adrian
But just by Jan den V!

So, I still love my catalogue,
It is my heart's delight,
Of all my "prints" it is the best,
The only one just right.
I love to read its noble names,
And send it far and wide.
I've had it printed by De Vinne,
With bibliographic pride.

THE HARTFORD POST.

THE LIBRARY

[Sung at the opening of the Haverhill Library, November 11, 1875.]

"LET there be light!" God spake of old,
And over chaos dark and cold,
And through the dead and formless frame
Of nature, life and order came.

Faint was the light at first that shone
On giant fern and mastodon,
On half-formed plant and beast of prey,
And man as rude and wild as they.

Age after age, like waves, o'erran
The earth, uplifting brute and man;
And mind, at length, in symbols dark
Its meaning traced on stone and bark.

On leaf of palm, on sedge-wrought roll;
On plastic clay and leathern scroll,
Man wrote his thoughts, the ages passed,
And lo! the Press was found at last!

Then dead souls woke; the thoughts of men
Whose bones were dust revived again;
The cloister's silence found a tongue,
Old prophets spake, old poets sung.

And here, to-day, the dead look down
The Kings of mind again we crown;
We hear the voices lost so long,
The sage's word, the sibyl's song.

Here Greek and Roman find themselves
Alive along these crowded shelves;
And Shakespeare treads again his stage,
And Chaucer paints anew his age.

As if some Pantheon's marbles broke
Their stony trance, and live and spoke,
Life thrills along the alcoved hall,
The lords of thought await our call!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

RELIGIO MEDICI

I

A BOOK? A solemn Temple of the Mind,
Dim with sweet smoke, where by the altar dwells
Music, sole priestess; she who in sad shells
Murmurs the rune God whispered to the wind
Breathed from His throne, which stars and spirit impels.

II

What sage dreams in this vestibule of heaven?
Seer, mystic, saint,—or wandering Earth's lost child.
Babbling quaint heresies whereat God smiled
Ere Peter wept, or the thief died forgiven:
Old faith with elder fears half-reconciled?

III

Rich-voiced Chaldean, whose majestic speech,
"Far above singing," wakes the inward ear,
And haunts, with ancient anthems grave and clear,
The heart's grey cloister, thy ecstatic reach
Drew some rare splendor from the empyreal sphere.

IV

Ah! might one grow the Titian of a thought,
The Handel of a soul's most deep desire,
In words like thine, whose golden wings aspire,
Till, purged and flaming in the sun they sought,
They "live immortal in the arms of fire."

JOHN TODHUNTER.

IN AN OLD LIBRARY

I

HERE the still air
Broods over drowsy nooks
Of ancient learning: one is 'ware,
As in a mystic aisle
Of lingering incense, of the balm of books.
So nard from cerecloths of Egyptian kings
Solemnized once the sepulchres of Nile.

II

Here quietness,
A ghostly presence, dwells
Among rich tombs; here doth possess
With an ecstatic dread
The intruder seeking old-world oracles
In books, centuries of books, centuries of tombs
That hold the spirits of the crownèd dead.

III

Go softly! Here
Sleep fair embalmèd souls
In piled-up monuments, in their sere
And blazoned robes of fame,
Conquerors of Time. Whisper to these
grey scrolls,
Call Poet, Sage, Romancer, Chronicler,
And every one will answer to his name.

IV

Man walks the earth
The quintessence of dust:
Books, from the ashes of his mirth
Madness and sorrow, seem
To draw the elixir of some rarer gust;
Or, like the Stone of Alchemy, transmute
Life's cheating dross to golden truth of
dream.

JOHN TODHUNTER.

THE ATTENTIVE BOOKSELLER

OH! why does the bookseller follow my path
Like a hound on the tiger's track?
His smile so commercial awakens my wrath,
And I turn a non-intercourse back.

Does he think that his volumes will disappear,
Unless he shall keep me in view?
For his "up-to-date" issues he need not fear,
I loathe every book that is new.

I'm looking for something he never has seen,
Or perhaps for just nothing at all,
In hope that some treasures my vision may glean
As it ranges the cloth-covered wall.

"May I wait on you, sir?" said a maid at my side,
For the twentieth time in a store;
"No, madam, I thank you," I coldly replied,
"I am married"—I heard nothing more.

But the bitterest pill that is ever prescribed,
That throws me almost in a fit,
Is showing, when everything good is denied,
A volume that I have just writ!

IRVING BROWNE.

TOAST TO OMAR KHAYYÁM

An East Anglian Echo Chorus

CHORUS

IN this red wine, where Memory's eyes seem glowing
Of days when wines were bright by Ouse and Cam,
And Norfolk's foaming nectar glittered, showing
What beard of gold John Barleycorn was growing,
We drink to thee whose lore is Nature's knowing,
Omar Khayyám!

I

Star-gazer who canst read, when Night is strowing
Her scriptured orbs on Time's frail oriflamme,
Nature's proud blazon: "Who shall bless or damn?
Life, Death, and Doom are all of my bestowing!"

CHORUS

Omar Khayyám!

Toast to Omar Khayyàm

II

Master whose strain of balm and music, flowing
Through Persian gardens, widened till it swam—
A fragrant tide no bank of Time shall dam—
Through Suffolk meads where gorse and may were blowing,

CHORUS

Omar Khayyám!

III

Who blent thy song with sound of cattle lowing,
And caw of rooks that perch on ewe and ram,
And hymn of lark, and bleat of orphan lamb,
And swish of scythe in Bredfield's dewy mowing?

CHORUS

Omar Khayyám!

IV

'Twas Fitz, "Old Fitz," whose knowledge, farther going
Than lore of Omar, "Wisdom's starry Cham,"
Made richer than thine opulent epigram;
Sowed seed from seed of thine immortal sowing.

CHORUS

Omar Khayyám!

In this red wine, where Memory's eyes seem glowing
Of days when wines were bright by Ouse and Cam,
And Norfolk's foaming nectar glittered, showing
What beard of gold John Barleycorn was growing,
We drink to thee whose lore is Nature's knowing,
Omar Khayyám!

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

His Favorite Book

HIS FAVORITE BOOK

SPEAKIN' of books—they's some that looks
Invitin' as that strawstack yunder,
Whur the cattle air, in the barnyard there,
A-pull'n and chaw'n away like thunder.
And in my day I've chawed that way
Hull hours at books, when thur wasn't very
Much work to do; but I tell you
I like the old big dictionary!

It's in that chair, a-settin' where
My youngest boy was usin' of it
At dinner time—you seen him climb
Upon it then? That's why I love it.
Its leaves are torn; the hide is worn
Clean through in spots, upon its covers;
But when I set, with both eyes shet,
It gives me dreams jest like some lover's!

And I go clear back forty year,
And, jest a little hungry feller,
Set perched again on that same plain
Old book—then fresh and young and yeller—
At dinner, and my mother's hand
Is toyin' with my curls contrary;
And that is why, I guess, that I
Like best the old big dictionary!

THE CHICAGO RECORD.

THE PLEASANT WORLD OF BOOKS

THERE are who find their happiness in strolling near and far,
As if perchance their birth had been beneath some errant star,
The trackless desert beckons them, they scale the mountain peak,
And ever just beyond them see, some gladness coy to seek;
For me, I sit beside my fire, and with benignant looks
From dear familiar shelves they smile, my pleasant friends, the books.

A world of sweetest company, these well-beloved ones wait
For any mood, for any hour; they keep a courteous state.
Serene and unperturbed amid the ruffles of my day,
They are the bread my spirit craves, they bless my toiling way.

A pleasant world is theirs, wherein, though battles wax and wane,
There rolls the sound of triumph, and there dwells surcease of pain.

The Pleasant World of Books

On pages sparkling as the dawn forever
breathes and glows
Through ages red with patriot blood, white
freedom's stainless rose.

In this fair world of calmest skies, I meet
the martyr's palm,
There float to it dear melodies from coasts
of heavenly balm;
All comfort here, all strength, all faith, all
bloom of wisdom lives,
And be the day's need what it may, some
boon this wide world gives.

The freedom of the city where one walks in
crowds, alone,
The silence of the upland, where one climbs
anear the throne,
The blitheness of the morning, and the sol-
emn hush of night,
Are in this pleasant world of books, for one
who reads aright.

Here, pure and sharp the pictured spire its
cleaving point uplifts,
There, swept by stormy winds of fate,
time's sands are tossed in drifts,
And I who sit beside the fire am heir of
time and sense,
My book to me the angel of God's sleepless
providence.

Who will, may choose to wander far over
sea and land,
For me the table and the lamp extend a
friendlier hand;
And I am blessed beyond compare while
with benignant looks
From home's familiar shelves they smile,
my pleasant world of books.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

A BOOK OF POEMS

PONDʼRING o'er a gilded volume
Rich with gems, I am to-night,
Looking for the sweetest column,
Scanning for some rays of light.
Here are poets from the distance
With the softest lyric rhyme,
Calling back into existence
Sweet chords lost in lapse of time.

Here portrayed are silent faces—
Silent lips and silent eyes—
Where my finger deftly traces,
Looking for some glad surprise—
Looking for some friend who's drifting
Out upon the Western wold,
For companions now uplifting
Drops of ink for drops of gold.

Lo! inwrought like fibres golden
In yon leaf upon the tree,
Are these stanzas, new and olden,
Penned in chants of melody.
Quaintest rhetʼric penned, but splendid
In simplicity and truth—
Facts and fancies; as blended
By the aged bard and youth.

Book Lovers' Verse

As I turn the snowy pages,
  Each enframed with golden wire,
Mystic sounds come back from ages,
  Strains from Moore and Milton's lyre.
Dreams of Shakespeare's musing rambles,
  Thoughts of Goldsmith and his fife,
Odes of Pope and Scott and Campbell
  Flash across the path of life.

And when sleepily I fold them—
  Fold the rhymers back in place,
Fancy's mind can quite behold them,
  As the dureful hymns they trace.
Some are mothers with devotion
  In their sonnets of to-day,
Others sing of field and ocean,
  Mount and glen—and sweet their lay.

WILLIAM R. JACOBS.

A BOOKMAN'S COMPLAINT OF HIS LADY

MY lady ofttimes chideth me
Because I love so much to be
Amid my honest folios.
"Thou lovest more to pore on those"—
In pretty scorn she sometimes saith—
"Than on thy mistress' eyes, i' faith!
Small good true lovers gain meseems
From dust and must of printed reams."
Ah! would that I could make her see,
What is so clear to thee and me,
How much our happy love-life owes
To those poor honest folios.
She little dreams that hidden there
I found a glass that mirrored her,
A magic glass which showed her me
As my own soul's ideal She,
Long ere we met and wedded eyes
Or made a soft exchange of sighs.
Nor knoweth she that thence I drew
The thought that, sweet as morning dew
Changeth the leaden life to gold,
And keepeth Love from growing old.
Nor may I tell what things beside
Within those leathern covers hide.
How would she scorn my small deceit,
Dare I confess that fine conceit

That pleased her so the other day,
Was from an old-world roundelay;
And many another charm and grace
That keeps Love young in spite of days,
Was but a bloom that long had lain
'Mid yellow pages young again.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

THE BOOK COLLECTOR

"The Shyp of Folys of the Worlde."

SO in likewise of Bookes I have store;
But few I reade, and fewer understande:
I folowe not their doctrine, nor their lore:
It is enough to bear a booke in hande;
It were too much to be in such a lande,
For to be bounde to loke within the booke:
I am content on the fayre coveryng to looke.
Still I am busy bookes assembling;
For to have plentie it is a pleasaunt thing;
In my conceyt to have them ay in hand:
But what they meane do I not understande.
But yet I have them in great reverence,
And honor, saving them from filth and ordure,
By often brushing, and much diligence:
Full goodly bounde in pleasaunt coverture,
Of dames, sattin, orels of velvet pure:
I keepe them sure, fearing lest they should be lost,
For in them is the cunning wherein I me boast.—

But if it fortune that any learnéd man
  Within my house fall to disputation,
I drawe the curtaynes to shewe my bokes
    then,
  That they of my cunning should make
    probation.—
  I love not to fall in altercation:—
And while, the common, my bookes I turne
    and winde,
For all is in them, and nothing in my minde.

ALEXANDER BARCLAY.

THOUGHTS IN A LIBRARY

SPEAK low! tread softly through these
halls;
Here genius lives enshrined;
Here reign in silent majesty
The monarchs of the mind.

A mighty spirit host they come
From every age and clime;
Above the buried wrecks of years
They breast the tide of time.

And in their presence-chamber here
They hold their regal state,
And round them throng a noble train,
The gifted and the great.

O child of Earth! when round thy path
The storms of life arise,
And when thy brothers pass thee by
With stern, unloving eye,

Here shall the poets chant for thee
Their sweetest, loftiest lays,
And prophets wait to guide thy steps
In Wisdom's pleasant ways.

Come, with these God-anointed kings
Be thou companion here;
And in the mighty realm of mind
Thou shalt go forth a peer!

ANNE C. LYNCH BOTTA.

SONNET ON PARTING WITH HIS BOOKS

AS one who destined from his friends to part
Regrets his loss, but hopes again erewhile
To share their converse and enjoy their smile,
And tempers, as he may, affliction's dart;
Thus, loved associates, chiefs of elder art,
Teachers of wisdom, who could once beguile
My tedious hours and lighten every toil,
I now resign you! Nor with fainting heart;
For pass a few short years, or days, or hours,
And happier seasons may their dawn unfold,
And all your sacred fellowship restore;
When, freed from earth, unlimited its powers,
Mind shall with mind direct communion hold,
And kindred spirits meet to part no more.

WILLIAM ROSCOE.

THE LIBRARY OF YORK CATHEDRAL

THERE shalt thou find the volumes that contain
All of the ancient Fathers who remain;
There all the Latin writers make their home
With those that glorious Greece transferred to Rome,
The Hebrews draw from their celestial stream,
And Africa is bright with learning's beam.

Here shines what Jerome, Ambrose, Hilary thought,
Or Athanasius and Augustine wrought.
Orosius, Leo, Gregory the Great,
Near Basil and Fulgentius coruscate.

Grave Cassiodorus and John Chrysostom
Next Master Bede and learned Aldhelm come.
While Victorinus and Boethius stand
With Pliny and Pompeius close at hand.

Wise Aristotle looks on Tully near,
Sedulius and Juvencus next appear,
Then come Albinus, Clement, Prosper too,
Paulinus and Arator. Next we view
Lactantius, Fortunatus. Ranged in line
Virgilius Maro, Statius, Lucan, shine.

Donatus, Priscian, Phobus, Phocas, start
The roll of masters in grammatic art.
Entychius, Servius, Pompey, each extend
The list. Comminian brings it to an end.

There shalt thou find, O reader, many more
Famed for their style, the masters of old lore,
Whose many volumes singly to rehearse
Were far too tedious for our present verse.

ALCUIN, ABOUT 780, A. D.

VERSES IN A LIBRARY

I

AN APPEAL

GIVE me that book whose power's such
That I forget the north wind's touch.

Give me that book that brings to me
Forgetfulness of what I be.

Give me that book that takes my life
In seeming far from all its strife.

Give me that book wherein each page
Destroys my sense of creeping age.

Give me that book that makes me think
I've stores of wealth, instead of ink,

And bills unpaid, and pens and glue,
With not a line in mind that's new.

Give me that book – and make it long
Enough to laugh for aye; this song

To him who sends I'll dedicate
My book of verse entitled "Fate:"

A garland sweet of sonnets grand,
For sale on every newsman's stand;

Or, through the mail, postpaid, you know,
Half boards, top-gilded, 16mo.

II

A CURSE

Confound you, Mr. O. Khayyám!
Confound you, Addison and Lamb!

Confound you, Milton, Herrick, Gray!
Confound you, Jonson; blast you, Gay!

Confusion, Shakespeare, to your dust,
And Burns and Byron, be ye cussed!

Confound you, Thackeray and Scott,
And Dickens, and old Parson Lott!

Confound ye for a selfish band,
For that ye did not stay the hand,

And leave, like decent men and true,
A thing or two for me to do!

It's tough for one in these drear days
To find you've "cornered" all the bays.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

THE BOOK AUCTION.

"HOW much am I bid?" said the spry
auctioneer,
"For the songs of a well known bard?"
The bard, incog., who was hovering near,
Looked up and his breath came hard.

"I am offered a dime!—just think of it,
gents!—
For these 'Songs of the Dewy Dawn!'
Are you all done bidding? Ten! ten cents—
Ten cents and—going—and gone!"

"You don't know elegant books from
trash!"
Joked the jubilant auctioneer;
The incog. author bit his mustache
And felt confoundedly queer.

"A beautiful copy of Shakespeare's Pomes!
How much do I hear? Look alive!
A right nice work to embellish your homes!
Five cents! Sold to cash for five!"

The incog. singer twinkled his eye,
And inwardly said, with a thrill:
"American poetry don't sell high,
But I'd hate to go cheap as old Bill."

W. H. VENABLE.

IN ARCADY

I

GIVE me the pleasure of a book,
An ample shade, a running brook,
A piping bird, and splashing trout,
And wild flowers shining all about;
Then even kings would envy me,
So full of joy my life would be.

II

With cheerful heart and cloudless brain,
No breath of care, no touch of pain,
Arcadian summer soft and light,
A cooling breeze, and skies most bright;
Then little birds would envy me,
So full of joy my life would be.

III

In careless ease there let me lie,
The happiest man beneath the sky,
There idly scan some book of old,
Filled with a poet's thoughts of gold;
Then blushing brides would envy me,
So full of joy my life would be.

CHARLES T. LUSTED.

BOOKS

WHEN sorrow sets around thy wayward path,
And many troubles follow in her train;
When dire mischance it seems will never wane,
And life for thee no sort of pleasure hath;
When friendship proves as frail as any lath,
Snaps in a trice and leaves the dull slow pain—
The aching heart that ne'er may hope again—
And drear despair seems life's sole aftermath,
There is an outlet from thy dreary creed;
There is a pasture on which thou may'st feed;
There is a never-failing friend at hand.
Turn to thy shelves and choose a goodly tome,
A mighty mind of ancient Greece or Rome,
Perchance a bard of thy own native land.

Then may'st thou leave all troubles far behind,
And soar unto the regions of the blest;
Then be thy body, mind and soul at rest,
Oblivious to the tempest and the wind

That howls around the shipwreck of thy mind.
For, by the thraldom of that tome possessed,
Despair hath lost its potence to molest,
And not an inlet can thy troubles find.
Oh, blessings be on every poet head!
With wreaths of joy may each be garlanded,
And happiness forever be thy meed!
Who for us men hath wrought so great a joy,
Devoid of all adulterate alloy—
A genuine soil whereon the soul may feed.

CYRIL M. DREW.

BOOKS

UNDYING works of dying men
Product of paper, ink and pen,
And human brain;
Imperishable as the mind,
Sight-giving to the inly blind,
Nuggets of gold in them we find,
And priceless grain—

Grain that makes food to feed the soul,
Gives strength and stimulates the whole,
Builds up the man
And fits him for a higher life,
Beyond the range of time and strife,
Where mind prevails and thought is rife,
Eternal plan.

We reverence them—these things of might,
Which give us comfort, joy, delight,
Instruct and bless;
Companions of our quiet hours,
Silent yet wielding awful powers,
Stronger than forts or frowning towers,
Yet ne'er oppress.

With men we quarrel and contend,
But books we never can offend
  With angry word;
Calm, sober, stately dignity,
As though sparks of divinity,
With mind in true affinity,
  Strongly accord.

In books departed men do live,
And speak and act and ever give
  Thoughts for all time;
No weariness they ever know,
Like streams that yield a constant flow,
Like trees of knowledge always grow,
  Fruits most sublime.

GEORGE W. ARMSTRONG.

IN AN OLD LIBRARY

THERE in the dusk of this dim-windowed hall
The weary minds of generations rest;
Poor prisoner ghosts, by sad neglect oppressed,
In dismal companies along the wall;
Long phantom lines of poets and of seers,
Their songs grown cold, their raptures heeded not
And all their wisdom wearily begot,
Turned foolish through forgotten years.

Fair summers that will never come again,
They wasted out with trouble prodigal,
And springs and falls and winters beautiful,
That here might rest in store for careless men
The hoarded ignorance of time. Alas,
What perishable fruit their labors bore;
The hungry crowds go roaring by their door,
Nor wait one moment as they pass.

Across their prison-house the creeping sun
Dials the endless days upon the floor;
The crafty spider binds them o'er and o'er
With fetters that may never be undone.

Oh, for the days they lost in labor vain.
Here in the dusk all molder silently,
Save when across the panes some prisoner bee
Raves for his open fields again.

Raves for the sky, the meadows and the trees;
Wild with the dark, frantic with mad distrust
Of this dim place of weariness and dust.
Round him the great of out-spent centuries
In gaunt procession listen silently—
Dead oracles no questioner comes to seek;
Their words, which woke the world, now grown more weak
Than the shrill droning of a frightened bee.

GEIK TURNER.

AN INVOCATION IN A LIBRARY

O BROTHERHOOD, with bay-crowned brows undaunted,
Who passed serene along our crowded ways,
Speak with us still! For we, like Saul, are haunted:
Harp sullen spirits from these later days!

Whate'er high hope ye had for man, your brother,
Breathe it, nor leave him like a prisoned slave
To stare through bars upon a sight no other
Than clouded skies that lighten on a grave.

In these still alcoves give us gentle meeting,
From dusky shelves kind arms about us fold;
Till the New Age shall feel her chilled heart beating
Restfully on the warm heart of the Old.

Till we shall hear your voices mild and winning
Steal through our doubt and discord as outswells
At fiercest noon, above a city's dinning,
The chiming music of cathedral bells!

Music that lifts the thought from trodden places
And coarse confusion that around us lie,
Up to the calm of high cloud-silvered spaces
Where the tall spire points through the soundless sky.

HELEN GRAY CONE.

FRIENDS IN SOLITUDE

MY books, my friends in solitude,
Which never mar my quietude;
Whose silent voices gently speak
In the great thoughts I love to seek.

Such company I ever find
A help to stimulate my mind,
And stir the feelings of my heart,
Which rise above all formal art.

I love to think of them away,
When I from home may go to stay;
And hope again their face to see,
Ere many days shall come and flee.

They never, in a fitful mood,
Do speak or act in way that's rude;
But always in a pleasant style,
They seem to greet me with a smile.

While things around me often change,
And take a course that is quite strange,
These friends are always of one mind,
And show a spirit mild and kind.

In books are treasures more than gold,
Great thoughts come down from minds of old,
Embalmed in forms that ever live,
And never cease their life to give.

How grand the monuments of mind!
Which leave all others far behind;
And shine with light that is sublime,
Lighthouses on the coasts of time.

JOHN MOORE.

A BOOK BY THE BROOK

GIVE me a nook and a book,
And let the proud world spin round;
Let it scramble by hook or by crook
For wealth or a name with a sound.
You are welcome to amble your ways,
Aspirers to place or to glory;
May big bells jangle your praise,
And golden pens blazon your story;
For me, let me dwell in my nook,
Here by the curve of this brook,
That croons to the tune of my book.
Whose melody wafts me forever
On the waves of an unseen river.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

A Fogy

A FOGY

OF course I keep my Shakespeare near,
and dote on Milton, too;
Preserve my Homer from the dust, and
Dante bright and new,
For some one might inquire, you know,
about these poets old,
Who hid in mountain-deeps of words their
scattered thoughts of gold.

But when I'm fain to spend awhile away
from Traffic's mart,
Like Longfellow then I seek some bard
"whose songs gushed from his heart."
The "Old Arm Chair" by Eliza Cook, or
Lowell's "First Snow Fall,"
Or "Highland Mary" by Bob Burns—these
please me more than all.

They seem to nurture sympathy, and light-
en all my dole,
And wash the dust of worldliness from off
the burdened soul.
O yes, I love my Shakespeare much, and
Milton's lines, indeed—
I keep the masters but to praise, the others
but to read!

WILL T. HALE.

TO HIS BOOK

A FAREWELL ADDRESS ON ITS PUBLICATION.

"Vertumnum Janumque, liber, spectare videris."

SO then, to Janus and Vertumnus, Book!
Thou seem'st at length to throw a wistful look;
Where tricked and varnished by the Sosian hand,
High on the venal shelf thou long'st to stand.
Yes, yes—I see, thy shy reserve is fled;
Averse to locks and bolts thou would'st be read:
And, slighting all my counsel, bid'st adieu
To private ears, to court the public view.
Well, have thy will,—and go thy way! but learn,
When once dismissed, thou never can'st return.
"*Fool that I was!*" methinks I hear thee cry,
When some fastidious critic flings thee by,
Or some admirer satiate of thy charms
Thrusts thee all torn and rumpled from his arms.
But, if I read thy destinies aright
Nor mists of self-love dim the prophet's sight,

To His Book

While novelty and youth's attractive bloom
Endure, thou shalt be much caressed at Rome.
But, when the vulgar touch thy beauty soils,
The silent moth shall batten on thy spoils;
Or to far Afric's coast thou shalt be sent
Or Spain, fast bound in odious banishment.
Then he, whose warning voice thou would'st not hear,
Shall slight thy sufferings and deride thy fear,—
Like him who once, his restive ass to mock,
Threw up the reins and drove him o'er the rock.
Nor is this all:—For, when the prime is past,
Old-age with lisping accents shall at last
Surprise thee teaching school-boys to repeat
Their daily task in every dirty street.
Thou then, what time the sun's intense ray
Summons around thee many a listener, say—
That, tho' a freeman's son, in fortune's spite
I imped my pinions for a prouder flight,
And soared aloof. Thus, what I lack in birth,
To make amends, shall swell the score of worth.

Say too that by the great—by men confessed
Supreme in peace and war—I was caressed.
Add that I loved to bask in summer skies,
Was grey betimes, in stature under size,
And quick to wrath; yet that my bitterest rage
Ne'er rankled. Tell them, if they ask my age,
Lollius and Lepidus the state controlled
When four and forty suns had o'er me rolled.

REV. CANON HOWES' TRANSLATION OF HORACE'S EPISTLES.

IN A BOOK OF OLD PLAYS

AT Cato's Head in Russell Street
These leaves she sat a-stitching;
I fancy she was trim and neat,
Blue-eyed and quite bewitching.

Before her on the street below,
All powder, ruffs and laces,
There strutted idle London beaux
To ogle pretty faces;

While, filling many a Sedan chair
With monstrous hoop and feather,
In paint and powder London's fair
Went trooping past together.

Swift, Addison and Pope, mayhap
They sauntered slowly past her,
Or printer's boy, with gown and cap
For Steele, went trotting faster.

For beau nor wit had she a look;
Nor lord nor lady minding,
She bent her head above this book,
Attentive to her binding.

And one stray thread of golden hair,
Caught on her nimble fingers,
Was stitched within this volume, where
Until to-day it lingers.

Past and forgotten, beaux and fair,
Wigs, powder, all outdated;
A queer antique, the Sedan chair,
Pope, stiff and antiquated.

Yet as I turn these odd, old plays,
This single stray lock finding,
I'm back in those forgotten days
And watch her at her binding.

WALTER LEARNED.

OLD BOOKS

A THRESHER prime is Father Time!
When harvest loads his wain,
He beats the hollow husks aside
And hoards the golden grain.

A winnower is Father Time!
The chaff he blows away;
The sweetest seed he treasures up
For many a year and day.

Oh, very wise is Father Time!
His flail is tried and true;
I love the garnered pile of books
He's winnowed through and through.

JOHNNY, GET YOUR GLOSSARY

WHAT makes the Scotsman's story-buiks,
That breathe the heather, whins and stooks,
Sae welcome at your ingle-neuks?
I dinna ken.
And yet they're playing drakes and dukes
Wi' Englishmen.

I needna say it's a' the craze
To daunder o'er Drumtochty's braes
(Whaur puir auld Domsie spent his days
In teachin' sums)
And ilka body's bound to praise
The toon o' Thrums.

Aince maids (at thirty-ane and six)
Had names like Rose and Beatrix;
But Baubie, Kirsty, Jean, noo licks
Your Flo or Di.
What eese are they for biggin' ricks
Or milkin' kye?

Your heroes' names hae changed, it seems,
Frae Aubrey, Guy, or John-a-Dreams,
To An'ra, Dauvit, Jock, or Jeems,
Or Rab, or Tam—
Douce lads, that kenna o' the stream
O' Thames or Cam.

I sometimes think a Lowlan' chiel
Maun gey an' aften come to feel
Hoo hard it is to read a reel
O' gweed braid Scots.
He'd hae to gang again to skweel
To louse the knots.

For instance, he maun learn, puir stock,
That barter signifies to trock;
And that he maunna yoke, but yock
A horse or meer.
He'll hae to ca' a timepiece knock;
For ask, say spier.

It needs a lad that isna blate
To read sic tales and gang the gate
O' fouk that maun be up to date.
If nae a Scot,
He'll hae to be, at ony rate,
A polyglot.

THE SKETCH.

FOR A COPY OF "THE COMPLEAT ANGLER."

"Le rêve de la vie champêtre a été de tout temps l'idéal des villes."—GEORGE SAND.

I CARE not much how men prefer
To dress your *Chub* or *Chavender;*—
I care no whit for line or hook,
But still I love old IZAAK's book,
Wherein a man may read at ease
Of "gandergrass" and "culverkeys,"
Or with half-pitying wonder, note
What *Topsell*, what *Du Bartas* wrote,
Or list the song, by *Maudlin* sung,
That *Marlowe* made when he was young:—
These things, in truth, delight me more
Than all old IZAAK's angling lore.

These were his Secret. What care I
How men construct the Hawthorn-fly,
Who could as soon make Syllabub
As catch your *Chavender* or *Chub;*
And might not, in ten years, arrive
At baiting hooks with frogs, alive!—
But still I love old IZAAK's page,
Old IZAAK's simple *Golden Age,*
Where blackbirds flute from ev'ry bough,
Where lasses "milk the sand-red cow,"

Where lads are "sturdy football swains,"
And nought but soft "May-butter" rains;
Where you may breathe untainted air
Either at *Hodsden* or at *Ware;*
And sing, or slumber, or look wise
Till *Phœbus* sink adown the skies,
Then, laying rod and tackle by,
Choose out some "cleanly Alehouse" nigh,
With ballads "stuck about the wall,"
Of *Joan of France* or *English Mall*—
With sheets that smell of lavender—
There eat your *Chub* (or *Chavender*),
And keep old IZAAK'S honest laws
For "Mirth that no repenting draws"—
To wit, a friendly stave or so,
That goes to *Heigh-trololliе-loe,*
Or more to make the ale-can pass,
A hunting song of *William Basse*—
Then talk of fish, and fishy diet,
And dream you "Study to be quiet."

AUSTIN DOBSON.

"Literature."
—Harper & Brothers.

THE BOOKSTALL

IT stands in a winding street,
A quiet and restful nook,
Apart from the endless beat
Of the noisy heart of Trade;
There's never spot more cool
Of a hot midsummer day
By the brink of a forest pool,
Or the bank of a crystal brook
In the maples' breezy shade,
Than the bookstall old and gray.

Here are precious gems of thought
That were quarried long ago,
Some in vellum bound, and wrought
With letters and lines of gold;
Here are curious rows of "calf,"
And perchance an Elzevir;
Here are countless "mos" of chaff,
And a parchment folio,
Like leaves that are cracked with cold,
All puckered and brown and sere.

In every age and clime
Live the monarchs of the brain;
And the lords of prose and rhyme,
Years after the long last sleep

Has come to the kings of earth
And their names have passed away,
Rule on through death and birth:
And the thrones of their domain
Are found where the shades are deep,
In the bookstall old and gray.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

LINES TO A BOOK BORROWER

[These lines are after Tennyson—so was the borrower.]

ASK me no more; the moon may draw the sea,
The cloud may stoop from heaven, and you to me,
But O too fond! when I have answered thee,
Ask me no more!

Ask me no more; I once did lend thee books
And what on earth's become of them, odzooks!
No man doth wot;
Ask me no more!

Ask me no more; the moon may draw the sea,
But you can draw no more books out of me!

F. C.

SHAKE, MULLEARY AND GO-ETHE

I

I HAVE a bookcase, which is what
Many much better men have not.
There are no books inside, for books,
I am afraid, might spoil its looks.
But I've three busts, all second-hand,
Upon the top. You understand
I could not put them underneath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

II

Shake was a dramatist of note;
He lived by writing things to quote.
He long ago put on his shroud:
Some of his works are rather loud.
His bald-spot's dusty, I suppose,
I know there's dust upon his nose.
I'll have to give each nose a sheath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

III

Mulleary's line was quite the same;
He has more hair, but far less fame.
I would not from that fame retrench—
But he is foreign, being French.

Yet high his haughty head he heaves,
The only one done up in leaves.
They're rather limited on wreath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

IV

Go-ethe wrote in the German tongue:
He must have learned it very young.
His nose is quite a butt for scoff,
Although an inch of it is off.
He did quite nicely for the Dutch;
But here he doesn't count for much.
They all are off their native heath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

V

They sit there, on their chests, as bland
As if they were not second-hand.
I do not know of what they think,
Nor why they never frown or wink.
But why from smiling they refrain
I think I clearly can explain:
They none of them could show much teeth—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

H. C. Bunner.

THE BIBLIOMANIAC'S BRIDE

THE women-folk are like to books—
  Most pleasing to the eye,
Whereon if anybody looks
  He feels disposed to buy.

I hear that many are for sale—
  Those that record no dates,
And such editions as regale
  The view with colored plates.

Of every quality and grade
  And size they may be found—
Quite often beautifully made,
  As often poorly bound.

Now, as for me, had I my choice,
  I'd choose no folios tall,
But some octavo to rejoice
  My sight and heart withal.

As plump and podgy as a snipe—
  Well worth her weight in gold,
Of honest, clean, conspicuous type,
  And just the size to hold!

With such a volume for my wife,
  How should I keep and con;
How like a dream should speed my life
  Unto its colophon!

Book Lovers' Verse

Her frontispiece should be more fair
  Than any colored plate;
Blooming with health, she would not care
  To extra-illustrate.

And in her pages there should be
  A wealth of prose and verse,
With now and then a *jeu d'esprit*—
  But nothing ever worse!

Prose for me when I wished for prose,
  Verse, when to verse inclined—
For ever bringing sweet repose
  To body, heart and mind.

Oh, I should bind this priceless prize
  In bindings full and fine,
And keep her where no human eyes
  Should see her charms, but mine!

With such a fair unique as this
  What happiness abounds!
Who—who could paint my rapturous bliss,
  My joy unknown to Lowndes!

EUGENE FIELD.

"A Little Book of Western Verse."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE CARAVANSARY

I KEEP a caravansary,
And, be it night or day,
I entertain such travelers
As chance to come my way.

Hafiz, maybe, or Sadi,
Who singing songs divine,
Discovered heaven in taverns,
And holiness in wine!

Or Antar and his Arabs,
From burning sands afar,
So faint in love's sweet trances,
So resolute in war!

The Brahmin from the Ganges,
The Tartar, Turcoman,—
Savage hordes, with spears and swords,
Who rode with Genghis Khan!

Or mummies from old Egypt,
With priestly, kingly tread,
Who, in their cerecloths, mutter
The Ritual of the Dead!

Who keeps a caravansary
Knows neither friend nor foe;
His doors stand wide on every side
For all to come and go.

The Koran, or the Bible,
Or Veda,—which is best?
The wise host asks no questions,
But entertains his guest!

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

AMONG MY BOOKS

AMONG my books—what rest is there
From wasting woes! what balm for care!
If ills appall or clouds hung low,
And drooping dim the fleeting show;
I revel still in vision's race.
At will I breathe the classic air,
The wanderings of Ulysses share;
Or see the plume of Bayard flow—
Among my books.

Whatever face the world may wear—
If Lilian has no smile to spare,
For others let her beauty blow,
Such favors I can well forego;
Perchance forget the frowning fair
Among my books.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.

A LITTLE BOOKWORM

NOT a noise throughout our dwelling
Of the urchin's presence telling:
Did he sleep?
Where had flown the dimpled laughter
Wont to ring from floor to rafter?
What I saw, a moment after,
Made flesh creep!

He had rent my Lamb in pieces,
There was nothing but the fleeces,
And Horne Tooke
He had taken in a twinkle:
Young looked old, with many a wrinkle;
Other poets, quite a sprinkle,
Strewed each nook.

My new Gay was sad, Hood tattered,
And my Bacon sliced and scattered;
Spoiled my Locke:
Pollock's Course of Time had run;
Browning was indeed quite done;
Vandal fists had just begun
Knox to knock.

The Decline and Fall of Gibbon
Swiftly came; to many a ribbon
It was rent.
Steele was twisted; there was pillage
In my fair Deserted Village;
Beaconsfield was past all tillage;
Hook was bent.

Would that I had caught the rover,
Ere the cyclone had blown over!
Fateful billow!
There he lies! could I be rude
On such slumber to intrude?
Zimmerman on Solitude:
That's his pillow!

MONROE H. ROSENFELD.

NULLA RETRORSUM

UMBRELLAS, strayed from clubland's halls,
Come back, though not in silk;
The man who goeth out to balls
Returneth with the milk.
The swallows come again with spring
That flit when summer's spent;
But all the seasons fail to bring
Me back the books I lent.

My senses strayed when Celia smiled,
Because her eyes were black;
But now, no more by love beguiled,
I've got them safely back.
My heart I gave returned to me
As lightly as it went;
E'en hopes long lost once more I see,
But not the books I lent.

All things return; in twilight gray
Day dies, to dawn anew;
The beef that's sent below to-day
Will make to-morrow's stew;
The bill collector cometh back
With covetous intent,
All things return—except, alack!
The books that I have lent.

They stood in "Russia," side by side,
  They filled one rosewood shelf;
They're now belonging, far and wide,
  To any but myself.
O! take my word, this world of pain
  Will fizzle out and end
Before you'll ever see again
  The books—the books you lend.

CLIPS.

THE LIBRARY OF A GENTLEMAN DECEASED

SOME people dote on spooks,
Postage stamps, or flies and hooks,
While to others old engravings are a feast;
But I much prefer the tale
Of "A library for sale,
Collected by a gentleman deceased."

You may never know his name,
Or the limits of his fame,
He might have been a poet or a priest,
But you know his little ways
From the sermons or the plays
Collected by the gentleman deceased.

What phrases can compare
With the Scarce or Very Rare,
What sorrow with the Foxed, or Soiled, or Creased,
As you read the auction mems.
On the literary gems
Collected by the gentleman deceased?

If the pages aren't cut,
If they're guiltless of a smut,
You think he never read them in the least;
While occasional dog's-ears,
Or some annotation smears,
Say something for the gentleman deceased.

It is clear, it seems to me,
Or, at least, it ought to be,
That a history may readily be pieced
From the books of divers kinds
(Representing many minds)
Collected by the gentleman deceased.

THE SKETCH.

THE BOOK

GALLERY of sacred pictures manifold,
A minster rich in holy effigies,
And bearing on entablature and frieze
The hieroglyphic oracles of old.
Along its transept aureoled martyrs sit;
And the low chancel side-lights half acquaint
The eye with shrines of prophet, bard, and saint.
Their age-dimmed tablets traced in doubtful writ!
But only when on form and word obscure
Falls from above the white supernal light
We read the mystic characters aright,
And life informs the silent portraiture,
Until we pause at last, awe-held, before
The One ineffable Face, love, wonder, and adore.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

My Harem

MY HAREM

A HAREM of beauties I boast—
Most excellent dutiful wives.
Each fancies she pleases me most,
Nor disputes with her sister, nor strives.
They are learned, and witty, and wise;
On my good and my pleasure they dote;
But they never break family ties
To wrangle in public or vote.

At a word their soft breasts they unfold,
And yield to my spirit's embrace;
Yet, when o'er her charms I grow cold,
Contented each sinks to her place.
They fire me, they melt me, they find
Where the fountains of feeling are hid,
And the shackles of passion unbind;
Yet they hush at the droop of my lid.

They tell me the wonderful tales
Of Persia and Araby blest;
One speaks of Europe's fair vales,
And one of the virginal West.
Hot love-talks one brings from the South,
Drunk in with the Sun's ardent beams;
And folk-lore one has in her mouth,
From the Northland's magnificent dreams.

Every week a new, beautiful form
  In my harem's retreat I enfold.
To the new love I'm never less warm,
  Towards the old love I never grow cold,
Yet censure I scorn and defy,
  And in Virtue's calm eyes dare to look;
No Mormon nor Turkman am I—
  Each beauty I boast is a book.

JEREMIAH MAHONEY.

WITH A COPY OF HERRICK

FRESH with all airs of woodland brooks
  And scents of showers,
Take to your haunt of holy books
  This saint of flowers.

When meadows burn with budding May,
  And heaven is blue,
Before his shrine our prayers we say,—
  Saint Robin true.

Love crowned with thorns is on his staff,—
  Thorns of sweet briar;
His benediction is a laugh,
  Birds are his choir.

His sacred robe of white and red
  Unction distils;
He hath a nimbus round his head
  Of daffodils.

EDMUND GOSSE.

TOO MANY BOOKS

I WOULD that we were only readers now,
And wrote no more, or in rare hearts of soul
Sweated out thoughts when o'erburdened brow
Was powerless to control.

Then would all future books be small and few,
And freed of dross, the soul's refinéd gold;
So should we have a chance to read the new,
Yet not forego the old.

But as it is, Lord help us, in this flood
Of daily papers, books and magazines!
We scramble blind, as reptiles in the mud,
And know not what it means.

Is it the myriad spawn of vagrant tides,
Whose growth overwhelm both sea and shore,
Yet often necessary loss, provides
Sufficient and no more?

Is it the broadcast sowing of the seeds,
And from the stones the thorns and fertile soil,
Only enough to serve the world's great needs
Rewards the sower's toil?

Is it all needed for the varied winds?
Gives not the teeming press a book too much—
Not one but in its dense neglect shall find
Some needful heart to touch?

Ah, who can say that even this blade of grass
No mission has—superfluous as it looks?
Then wherefore feel oppressed and cry, Alas,
There are too many books!

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

A Little Book

A LITTLE BOOK

A LITTLE book with here and there a leaf
Turned at some tender passage; how it seems
To speak to me—to fill my soul with dreams
Sweet as first love, and beautiful though brief!
Here was her glory; and on this page her grief—
For tears have stained it; here the sunlight streams,
And there the stars withheld from her their beams
And sorrow sought her white soul like a thief!
And here her name, and as I breathe the sweet,
Soft syllables, a presence in the room
Sheds a rare radiance; but I may not look:
The yellowed leaves are fluttering at my feet;
The light is gone, and I—lost in the gloom,
Weep like a woman o'er this little book.

FRANK L. STANTON.

"Songs of the Soil."
—D. Appleton & Co.

DEDICATION TO CORNELIUS NEPOS

MY little volume is complete,
With all the care and polish neat
That makes it fair to see:
To whom shall I then—to whose praise—
Inscribe my lively, graceful lays?—
Cornelius, friend, to thee.
Thou only of the Italian race
Hast dared in three small books to trace
All time's remotest flight:
O Jove, how labored, learned, and wise!
Yet still thou ne'er would'st quite despise
The trifles that I write.
Then take the book I now address,
Though small its size, its merit less,
'Tis all thy friend can give;
And let me, guardian Muse, implore
That when at least one age is o'er,
This volume yet may live.

CATULLUS.

Envoy

ENVOY

GO, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

"Poems and Ballads."
—Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE END

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